

Towards a Society based on Mutual Aid, Voluntary Cooperation & the Liberation of Desire

#58/Fall-Winter 2004-05

Vol.22, No.2

\$4.95

\$5.95 Canada

# Anarchy

## A Journal of Desire Armed

**Essentialism &  
the problem of  
Identity Politics**

Lawrence Jarach

**Demoralizing  
Moralism**

Jason McQuinn

**The Meaning  
of Tiananmen**

Burt Green

**Autonomous  
Self-Organization &  
Anarchist Intervention**

Wolfi Landstreicher



"New American" by Richard Mock

Reviews include:

**The Christie Files: My Granny Made Me an Anarchist &  
General Franco Made Me a Terrorist  
The Politics of Anti-Semitism**





## Part-Time Anarchists: Voting for Empire

W

ho are the part-time anarchists? Perhaps you've seen them in action recently. They are the people who call themselves anarchists but who argue that voting for John Kerry is important

in order to kick George W. Bush out of the presidency. They call themselves anarchists but they don't understand that there is far less than a dime's worth of difference between Bush and Kerry, and much of that tiny difference isn't necessarily to the better for Kerry.

I won't argue that non-voting in the statist electoral spectacles of late capitalist empire is any sort of absolute principle of a pure or genuine anarchist practice. It isn't absolute; it is just a centrally important, hard-won point of understanding for would-be radicals of any kind that within modern nation-states the electoral process will almost inevitably involve a narrow spectrum of choices which most of the time will directly support capital and state in some form or other. Whatever else it may mean, in the United States of America in the early 21st Century a vote for any national or state candidate is a vote *for* empire.

All of the traditional, radical anti-parliamentary criticisms remain in force. Voting for a national or state candidate (and most of the time for a local candidate as well) means helping to legitimate the spectacular farce of contemporary representative democracy—a farce that will generally have extremely little or no relevance to the advancement of any significant movement for genuinely radical social change. Playing by the rules of the electoral process at the least means some level of submission to the guiding assumptions of that process: maintenance of the nation-state and preservation of capitalism, acceptance of the legitimacy of an electoral system controlled by massive levels of corporate money and media propaganda, and refusal to pose the only genuinely radical alternative—direct individual and communal action.

*But*—some would-be-radical advocates of voting argue—what about the potential effects that may follow from the election of one or the other of the major candidates? If one candidate offers an alternative that might significantly ease the suffering and hardships of a substantial number of people, shouldn't we throw out our radical principles for the moment in order to increase the likelihood (however small) that this suffering and hardship may be ameliorated? After all, we can always take up our radical principles later, when nothing so consequential is at stake.

It should be obvious that a position like this directly demeans the importance of any genuinely radical activity (attempting to take back our lives) in favor of complicity or collaboration with capitalist and statist institutions (like political parties). Whenever just about any type of difference between candidates may potentially result in the amelioration of some social problem there will be people like these calling for the renunciation of social radicalism and rebellion

in favor of voting for the candidate who has promised to (or hinted that she or he might) do something about it. Those who succumb to this ransom logic will continually betray their radical commitments in order to fall into line supporting the "lesser evil." And the "lesser evil" will continue to mean supporting capital and nation-state.



The utterly dismal status of electoral politics in the United States makes the eruption of anarchist voices here in favor of voting to "dump Bush" appear even more bizarre than would be arguments for electoral participation in other, marginally more democratic, countries—such as those in Europe. The Republican and Democratic parties largely agree on all of the most central political and economic issues, leaving partial disagreements over cultural issues and degrees of difference over how much effort should be taken to destroy

remaining civil liberties, curb dissidence and imprison more poor, blacks and Hispanics. Beyond the most superficial levels of public relations and propaganda the Republican and Democratic parties both share similar anti-environmental, pro-corporate, anti-labor, neoliberal globalization programs.

Looking at the actual records in recent years, the administration of George W. Bush has largely continued policies that were already initiated or maintained by the Clinton administration. But G.W. Bush does have one significant distinction. Thanks to his reckless enthusiasm for big-lie politics (the refusal to acknowledge global warming, the non-existent weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, etc.) and disdain for traditional international alliances, in one term Bush has arguably done more to destroy the future prospects of the U.S. empire than any other U.S. president would ever likely have succeeded in doing. Although it is impossible to predict the future of a Bush or a Kerry presidency, it isn't exactly far-fetched to expect that four more years of Bush would mean a severely weakened U.S. geopolitically (due to massive overreach, along with continued arrogance and incompetence) and an imploding economy (with a greatly weakened dollar due to the oil economy moving from dollars to Euros, along with a depression led by U.S. stock market and real-estate meltdowns). All *that* would certainly be good news for much of the rest of the world. And even in North America it is impossible to predict how it might play out, though it always makes sense for radicals to anticipate *any* turn of events as a potential opportunity.

Bush or Kerry? Let the statist decide.

Before anarchists consider abandoning basic positions like the critique of electoral politics—even just temporarily in order to vote in a particular election—they should at the least make sure that they will likely be getting something out of that abandonment that makes it worthwhile overall. There's certainly no promise of *anything at all* that would make that abandonment sensible right now.

Don't vote! Piss on the voting booth!

—Jason McQuinn, co-editor



## Anarchists have forgotten their Principles



At the risk of passing as a simpleton, I confess that I would never have believed it possible that anarchists—even anarcho-leftists—would applaud and voluntarily take part in a presidential election campaign. It is said that the present situation shows the bankruptcy of our principles, and that it will be necessary to revise them. Generally speaking, every formula must be revised whenever it shows itself insufficient when coming into contact with fact; but it is not the case today, when the bankruptcy is not derived from the shortcoming of our principles, but from the fact that these have been forgotten and betrayed. What has the present election to do with human liberation? It seems elementary and fundamental for all revolutionaries (anarchist or otherwise) to keep outside every kind of compromise with government and the governing classes, so as to be able to continue our revolutionary preparations.

I have freely paraphrased Malatesta's denunciation of Kropotkin and the other prominent anarchists who declared their support for the Allies in the First Imperialist World War because plenty of self-described anarchists plan to vote in November. It's necessary to say it again, loud and clear (even though this will appear after the results are in): Historically and traditionally, anarchists have held that electoral politics, parliamentarianism, representative democracy, and all other forms of government that claim their legitimacy through so-called popular consent, are a sham. Just as much as a monarchy or a nakedly authoritarian dictatorship, democratic regimes are based on the implicit threat and the periodic use of violence in the form of the club, the gun, and the cage. All governments exist to maintain, reinforce, and extend the property relations of capitalism, an economic system based on the expropriation and immiseration of the many (those who must obey) by the few (those who can order). This inherently hierarchical and brutal system could not continue to exist without the State, which creates and enforces the exclusive legitimacy of currency (the medium of exchange) as well as the exclusive legitimacy of violence (the police and other military formations, as well as institutions of incarceration).

Of all the democratic systems in existence, perhaps the one with the most absurd characteristics is that of the USA. From the electoral college and the courts (these ridiculous built-in measures for dispensing with the popular vote only showcases the profound distrust the Founding Fathers and the Framers had for the rabble), to the complaints about uninformed voters, from the ideology of 51% majority rule winner-take-all, to the whole "lesser of two evils" excuse, the political system in this country is a colossal failure—even on its own terms. Few people are honest enough to see it for what it is: a republic ruled by a semi-hereditary elite, not a democracy ruled by "the people." The difference is obviously too subtle for pro-electoral leftists, who cling to the platitudes about Freedom and Justice they learned in junior high school. In any other country in the world, if a candidate had been involved in a hotly contested

election that hinged on the province ruled by his brother and that was ultimately decided in his favor by a judicial clique that was extremely cozy with his father and his father's previous boss, that election would have been held up as a quintessential example of electoral fraud and corruption.



Yet without calling into question any of these highly suspicious events of a mere four years ago, people like Noam Chomsky and a horde of self-proclaimed Progressives have thrown their weight behind the Kerry campaign, bleating in unison, "Anybody But Bush." That's the best they can offer? It's even less inspiring than the bankrupt Stalinist tactic of the Popular Front. More's the pity for us if anyone in that crowd ever attains anything resembling real power in this country. Speaking of the Popular Front, the last time anarchists on a massive scale decided not to stick by their principles in order to engage in electoral politics was in Spain, in 1936. The platform of that Popular Front included quite prominently the promise of an amnesty for the thousands imprisoned after an unsuccessful insurrection two years prior. Apparently it was an offer too tempting to pass up, and the CNT didn't carry on its usual abstentionist campaign; the increase in votes for Popular Front parties almost precisely correlated to the membership of the CNT.

While there is one very notable precedent of anarchists conspicuously voting in a national election, it was also exceptional in terms of hoping to attain concrete short-term goals. Each generation of American anarcho-voters (exactly like its evil-twin—the liberals) thinks it is the one that faces the most unimaginably horrible future if the Republican candidate is (re-)elected. I came of age during the Carter years, and faced the bleak future that the Reagan-Bush dynasty promised—and delivered. Reagan's belligerent strategy in Europe and Central America caused many anarchists to vote for his challenger in 1984. Their justification then was that they were trying to prevent nuclear war and the destruction of a Progressive state in Nicaragua (the one that outlawed independent labor unions, instituted a military draft, closed down gay bars, and engaged in a brutal suppression of Atlantic Coast Indian culture).

What justifications can these Progressives, these proud anarchists, offer twenty years later? What's the short-term reward they pretend will magically appear if they wish for it hard enough? Which anarchists and revolutionaries are going to be let out of jail? What radical restructuring of capitalism is on the agenda? There isn't even one tangible short-term benefit promised; in fact, the promise is of an expanded war in Iraq, this time prosecuted and led by a self-confessed war criminal. The choice between these two Skull and Bones Yale alumni has never been more false: Kerry, coming out of the same socio-economic milieu as Bush cannot possibly offer anything different. Capitalism, the State, Imperialist and Class War are still the only games in town. None of these pernicious institutions will be challenged in the least. The only people these principle-forgetting anarchists are fooling are themselves.

—Lawrence Jarach, co-editor



## Openers

delivery (up to 3 months or longer). We may very rarely exchange our mailing list with other publications and projects which we trust. Please notify us when subscribing if you do **not** want your address used for these purposes.

### Distribution

**Bulk copies for resale in North America at a cover price of \$4.95 are available at 20% discount for 10 to 19 copies; 40% discount for 20 to 59 copies; 45% discount for 60 to 99 copies; 50% discount for 100 to 249 copies; and 55% discount for 250 or more copies. We pay for shipping for all orders. For overseas rates contact us. All bulk orders must be prepaid unless acceptable credit references are provided.**

Please enclose an adequate self-addressed, stamped envelope with all articles, stories, photos, and graphic art *if* you wish to have them returned, or a 37¢ SASE *if* you want to receive a reply (or 2 IRCs for foreign addresses). Anything sent without a return SASE becomes the property of CAL Press. All submissions should be typed & double-spaced if at all possible. We prefer electronic submissions by e-mail (to [jmcquinn@coin.org](mailto:jmcquinn@coin.org)) or on IBM or Mac 3.5" diskettes in ASCII text, Wordperfect or Word format—but *no e-mail attachments*, please!

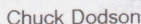
Short news and comment articles or reviews which are used in "Openers," "The Sad Truth," "Alternative Media Review" or "International Anarchist News" may be edited for brevity and style. Other submissions (features) will be significantly edited only with the author's permission. *Anarchy* editors reserve the power to make editorial comments, to run introductions or responses, to classify articles, to respond to letters, and to place sidebars wherever deemed appropriate. Until we can afford to remunerate authors, photographers, and graphic artists for their published contributions we will give free issues &/or subscriptions, or other appropriate tokens of our appreciation.

*New Editorial address for contributions, submissions and letters:*

C.A.L., POB 3448, Berkeley, CA 94703, U.S.A.

e-mail: [jmcquinn@coin.org](mailto:jmcquinn@coin.org)

In the U.S. please allow at least 90 days for delivery at the regular rate; 1st Class allow 30 days. Foreign subscribers, please allow adequate time for Surface rate





# Discontents



Richard Mock

## Essays

### 35 On Essentialism and the Problem of Identity Politics

BY LAWRENCE JARACH

### 39 Demoralizing Moralism

BY JASON MCQUINN

### 43 The Meaning of Tiananmen

BY BURT GREEN

### 51 Autonomous Self-Organization & Anarchist Intervention

BY WOLFI LANDSTREICHER

## Post-Left Debate

### 64 POST-LEFTISTS! ONE MORE EFFORT IF YOU WOULD BE ANTI-LEFTIST!

Front & back cover art: Richard Mock

## Departments

### Openers

- 2 Part-Time Anarchists:  
Voting for Empire
- 3 Anarchists have forgotten their  
Principles
- 6 Inside *Anarchy*

### The Sad Truth

- 8 Spartacus Books destroyed
- 10 Abu Ghraib & the Treatment of  
Prisoners in the U.S. Penal System
- 11 Another Trial for Eco-Anarchist  
Marco Camenisch

### Alternative Media Review

- 12 *The Politics of Anti-Semitism*
- 13 *The Politics of Anti-Semitism (#2)*
- 16 *The Christie File, Parts 1 & 2*
- 17 *Behind Fascist Lines &  
Terrorist Memoirs*
- 18 *Man, Play and Games*
- 19 *The Merry Month of May*
- 20 *Manual for Revolutionary Leaders*
- 23 *The UnAmerican Album*
- 24 *The Assassinations*
- 25 *Confronting Capitalism*
- 26 Anarchist Press Review

### International Anarchist News

- 28 Miscellany from the  
Black & Green gathering
- 30 Urgent Communique of Solidarity  
with the People of Cuba
- 32 Neither "Revolutionary" nor  
"Democratic" Liars
- 33 Anarchists in Turkey, 2004

### Columns

- 66 Strategy & Anarchy:  
The Myth of Mass

### 68-81 Letters

## Anarchy #58

Fall/Winter 2004-05

Press run: 7,600  
ISSN 1044-1387  
LC 88-13329  
OCLC 11733794  
Printed in USA

PUBLISHED BY  
C.A.L. Press

### EDITORS

Jason McQuinn  
Lawrence Jarach

### CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Mr. Fish, Sierra Madre, CA.  
James Koehnline, Seattle, WA.  
Richard Mock, Brooklyn, NY.  
Mark Neville, Seattle, WA.

### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Manolo Gonzalez, San Francisco, CA.  
Doug Imrie, Montréal, Quebec  
Jonathan Slyk, Vancouver, BC  
Michael William, Montréal, Québec  
John Zerzan, Eugene, OR.

### S.F. BAY AREA COLLECTIVE

Aragorn! • Leona Benten • vita cruciari  
• L.D. Hobson • Dot Matrix

### CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE

Bob Black • Ben Blue • Adam Bregman  
• Cuban Liberation Movement • Chuck  
Dodson • Terry Everton • Burt Green •  
Wolfi Landstreicher • *El Libertario* • Luís  
• Andres A. Marino • Batur Ozdinc •  
Joshua Sperber • Alex Trotter

Special thanks to Chuck Munson for  
making the *Anarchy* web site a reality and  
A. Hacker for computer assistance.

The views expressed in the articles,  
graphics, letters, etc. published in *Anarchy*  
do not necessarily reflect the views of  
C.A.L., or the editorial & production staff.

**Anticopyright-Anarchy** may be reprinted  
at will for non-profit purposes, except in  
the case of individual articles, graphics and  
other contributions copyrighted by their  
creators or previous publishers.

*Anarchy* is indexed in the *Alternative Press  
Index*, and C.A.L. Press is a member of the  
Independent Press Association, an organi-  
zation of independent periodical publishers  
in North America. (For more information  
on the IPA check its web site at:  
[www.indypress.org](http://www.indypress.org) )

C.A.L. Press

POB 1446

Columbia, MO 65205-1446

USA

E-mail: [jmcquinn@coin.org](mailto:jmcquinn@coin.org)

Anarchy Web Site: [www.anarchymag.org](http://www.anarchymag.org)

"The whirligig of time has its revenges."

-B.A.G. Fuller



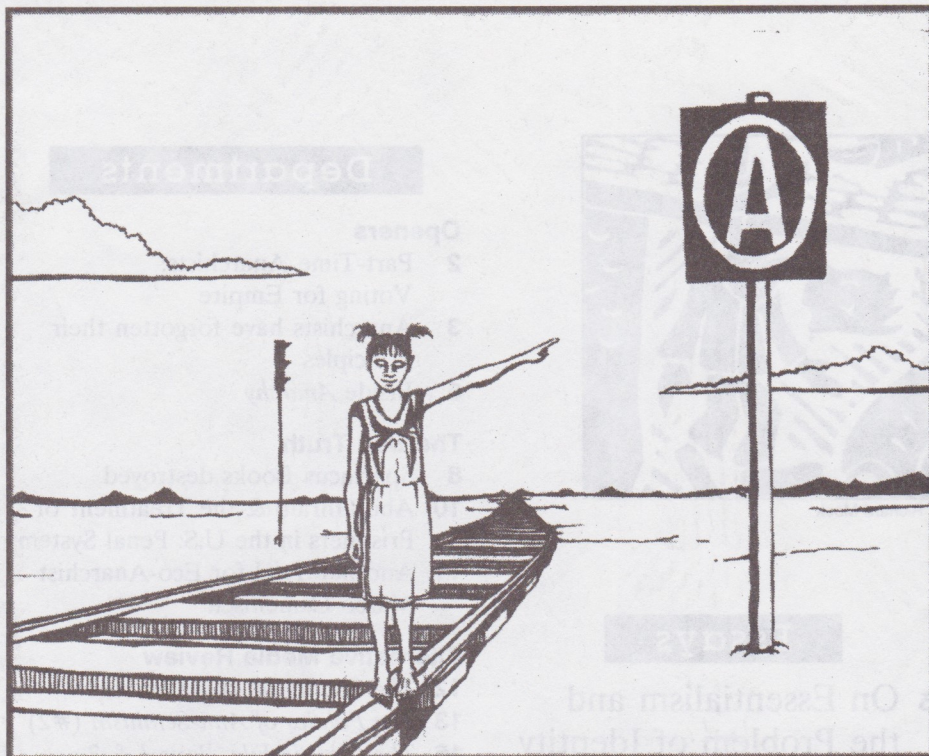
# Inside Anarchy

The big news in the U.S., besides the usual electoral farce, remains the dogged determination of the U.S. political-industrial-military-mass-media complex to continue digging itself into a deeper hole in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East. Uncomfortably for those in power, this self-destructive process continues just as a new round of oil shortage/price shocks reminds the world that peak oil production is imminent and the winding-down of the oil-industrial age will soon begin. Among other casualties will be mass air travel and suburban sprawl (soon to be no longer affordable except for the rich) and, eventually, the long sought-for infinite expansion of trade globalization.

This new issue of *Anarchy* will be the last for now coming out of Columbia, Missouri. After 24 years here, the next issue's editing and production will be moving to Berkeley, California, where subscriptions have already been handled for the last year. The magazine will continue being printed in the same basic format and size. But the editorial group will be greatly expanded again (from the current co-editors, Jason McQuinn and Lawrence Jarach) to include an entire collective, which hasn't been the case here in Columbia for many years. The same people who have worked on the magazine for the last few issues will all remain involved, but the organizational structure of the magazine will go through big changes.

The new address for editorial submissions, as well as production and subscription questions will be: C.A.L., POB 3448, Berkeley, CA 94703, USA. However, the old address will remain open and continue to handle distribution (and a few miscellaneous editorial functions) for the near future: C.A.L. POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446, USA. After the move is complete to the East Bay in California, C.A.L. Press Columbia will concentrate on book publishing.

This issue begins with two editorials critical of the incredibly naive susceptibility of all too many U.S. anarchists to the current lure of electoral politics. The feature essays this time begin with Lawrence Jarach's "Preliminary Theses for a longer Discussion on Essentialism and the Problem of Identity Politics." We definitely hope to include more discussion on this topic in upcoming issues. The features also include



my own "Demoralizing Moralism," on another of the more prevalent problems within the radical milieu; Burt Green's account of "The Meaning of Tiananmen," on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the suppression of autonomous Beijing; and Wolfi Landstreicher's highly important description of "Autonomous Self-Organization and Anarchist Intervention: An Anarchist Tension."

In this issue, we have come close to catching up on contributions to the letters column (though not quite), but in the process we had to leave out the popular "Embarrassments to the Anarchist Milieu!" column for lack of space. It should be back with the next issue.

For readers of the book reviews in this issue, it should be noted that, although *Manual for Revolutionary Leaders* is currently out-of-print (and thus not easy to find), much of this excellent book (parts I and III) can be accessed on the web at: <http://angrynerds.com/manual/>

As usual there will be an *Anarchy*/C.A.L. Press table at the upcoming 2005 San Francisco Bay Area Anarchist Book Fair on March 26th, 2005. Any readers who make it to the book fair are welcome to look us up. By that time we should have the first issue

published by the Berkeley editorial & production collective completed, along with several of the backlogged C.A.L. Press book publishing projects finally available.

The book fair will be accompanied by the fifth annual BASTARD Bay Area Anarchist Conference, which will take place the following day on Sunday, March 27th. Information on the conference will be posted on the web at [sfbay-anarchists.org](http://sfbay-anarchists.org) as it becomes available. Or you can write to ASG c/o Long Haul, 3124 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, CA 94705. Location of the conference is to be announced.

You might note again that the selection of C.A.L. Books on page 65 has lengthened, to include John Zerzan's latest collection, *Running on Emptiness*, and Stuart Christie's important examination of the FAI and CNT in the Spanish Revolution and Civil War, *We, the Anarchists! The History of the Makhnovist Movement* remains out-of-print, though we hope to get more copies of this latter essential book just as soon as it's back in print. The old *Anarchy* T-shirt design also remains sold-out, but the East Bay Area collective has come up with a new design (above) based on the graphic art used for years now with the editorials in each issue.

**-Jason McQuinn, Co-Editor**





"Nuke Bird" by Richard Mock (2002).

## On a little more personal note:

I'd like to thank all of the people who helped make *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* all that it has been and all that it has become over the years from its beginning as a locally-oriented, 4-page street-sheet in Columbia, Missouri.

Publishing a substantial, successful, internationally distributed magazine takes more time, energy, talents, commitment and dedication from a larger group of contributors than most readers would ever imagine. Paying attention to the hundreds of names that have appeared on the masthead (on page 5 of this issue, usually on page 3 of most issues) over the years will give an idea

of the diversity of the contributors involved in the creation and maintenance of this project. And that won't be counting all the anonymous or nameless contributors whose names have never appeared there through either accident or design.

As I began the process of layout for this issue the plan was still that I would be putting together one final issue next Spring, but the East Bay/Berkeley collective recently decided that it was ready to take over after this issue is published, instead. That leaves little time for summing up the experiences of those involved in the last 24 years of publishing *Anarchy* magazine. So I won't attempt that here and now. Instead I will offer to contribute an essay on "The life and times of *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*" for the 25th anniversary issue in the coming year. I would also like to invite

everyone who has taken part in this publishing project to write letters for publication in the 25th anniversary issue evaluating the project and its effects—in general on the radical milieu and specifically on the anarchist milieu—over the last quarter century.

Lastly, I would like to thank the readers of this magazine who have supported its existence above all by consistently maintaining enough interest in its contents and message to keep it financially stable throughout all the storms of the capitalist sea: bankruptcies of distributors, the ebbing of independent bookstores and rise of chain bookstores, the occasional cries for boycott by anarcho-ideologues, and the sometimes crazy rises in paper and postage costs.

*Anarchy* moves on from its 24th to its 25th year with bright promise for the future.

**-Jason McQuinn, Soon-to-be former-editor**



# Fire claims radical bookstore in Vancouver: Spartacus Books destroyed

**S**partacus Books, one of Canada's oldest and largest radical booksellers was destroyed in a fire April 25, 2004.

Eleven fire trucks and over fifty firefighters eventually gained control of the three-alarm blaze that started around 6:30 a.m. in a dumpster behind the building Spartacus Books was located in. But by the time fire trucks arrived flames had already spread throughout the building and created smoke damage to two adjacent buildings. The smoke plume was visible across the entire city. Built in the 1890s in the heart of Vancouver's downtown, the heritage two-story brick building was home to an eclectic assortment of tenants, including artist studios, a vintage clothing store, an Amsterdam-style marijuana café, as well as the bookstore. There were no injuries.

Originally called the Spartacus Socialist Education Society, the nonprofit organization started in 1972 as a small left-wing collective at Simon Fraser University. Roger Perkins, who was a campus bookstore employee, began to order in socialist titles which were then tabled by the collective around the campus. The popularity of the books grew as did the collective, and by the Spring of 1973 the idea of opening a retail bookstore took shape above a pool hall on the third floor of a building at 130 West Hastings Street. Situated in Vancouver's downtown eastside neighborhood, notorious for its distinction as the poorest postal code in Canada, the new bookstore was home to the urban dispossessed and the city's most marginalized residents. With an atmosphere more like a library than a retail shop, Spartacus Books helped foster a sense of community to those who needed it most.

The store quickly attracted activists from around British Columbia and Washington State, benefitting at that time from the mostly Wobbly influence in the region. Jack Scott, a former union leader from the 1930s ("On to Ottawa" trek) and founder of the Worker's Unity Party, was one of the bookstore's first volunteers. Kicked out of the Communist Party for being too radical, Scott later turned to Maoism and finally to libertarian socialism before retiring from the store in his mid-80s. He was easily one of the most colorful and influential stalwarts at Spartacus Books, and the person most often, if not most fondly associated with the store.

Kevin Annett, another early volunteer, recalls how, as a teenager, he became involved. "I met a lot of veterans like Jack at



Photo: The Spartacus Collective.

Spartacus Books: men and women who had led strikes when you could get killed for doing so, people who had fought the whole system with nothing but their courage, and won. They began to show me the real world, the one I had sensed but could never describe. I heard their stories on Friday nights, when the bookstore held public forums that drew hundreds of people: trade unionists, revolutionaries, refugees, and just hungry men off Hastings Street looking for something more than charity to feed on. And so I started working at the store and organizing the Friday night forums."

The discussions were not always cordial though. The charm (or as some would say, the curse) of Spartacus Books was that it refused to be sectarian, and both customers and staff were made up of a constellation of every ideology opposed to capitalism. This open-door policy often resulted in clashes during meetings. Kevin Annett remembers one Friday night when "A fight broke out and some chairs got broken. But then we all went around the corner to the Lotus for a beer or two."

Although Spartacus Books billed itself as such, it was not a true collective nor completely volunteer run, since it had a full-time paid manager (or the more politically correct title, "coordinator") who could make final decisions regarding financial matters or about which books to order. Over the years

different managers handled this responsibility with different degrees of integrity. Yet on the whole, most decisions were made by consensus and the emphasis was on inclusion. To increase cash flow, the bookstore sold annual memberships for a nominal fee and offered members discount pricing. Despite infighting, high volunteer turnover, thefts, attempted take-overs by Leninists and perennial financial crises, Spartacus Books seemed to have hit on a formula for longevity and success.

In 1975, Spartacus Books moved two blocks away to its second and final location on the second floor of 311 West Hastings Street. The red star above the doorway was transplanted to the new entrance. Other stars made their appearances too, like Jane Fonda for instance, who would be among the celebrities occasionally spotted. The walls became adorned with radical posters from the past and current era of political campaigns: Vietnam, African apartheid, Stonewall in New York, the Sandinistas in Latin America, Malcolm X, Fidel Castro, Ché Guevara, Greenpeace (founded in Vancouver) as well as local and regional campaigns. By 1980 the anarcho-leftist publication *Open Road* moved into an office down the hall. Direct Action, the anarchist urban guerilla group, was in its heyday and a small but colorful painting by Julie Belmas depicting a Salvadoran peasant woman soon found a



permanent home in the bookstore as well.

Inevitably some splits did occur. The Trots opened their own outlets, and there was a Marxist bookstore on Granville Street for a while. Spartacus Books remained, in the 1980s, committed to its original mission of non-sectarianism, persisting even through the Reagan [U.S.]/Mulroney [Canada] years which had cast such a dark cloud over radical dissent in North America. In the 1990s activism seemed to pick up again and the most prominent sign in the store became "Please don't shoplift here!-Go to a chain store." Before the decade and century were out, the local anti-APEC protests inspired by Spartacus staffer Jaggi Singh would usher in a new wave of volunteers and signal a new general direction for many radical activists. Two years later, riot weary protesters would return from the Battle of Seattle to Vancouver to show off their souvenirs of rubber bullets and bruises. Anarchy was now the watchword, reflecting the changing political analyses and temperaments.

My introduction to Spartacus Books came in 1997 when I joined the newly formed Vanarchy discussion group which met at the bookstore. I quickly applied to be a volunteer and within a fortnight was putting in the required weekly four hour shift. Many impressions and memories come to mind when thinking about the nearly six years I spent with the store. I remember the musty smell-perhaps a mixture of old books and mouse droppings; the sales sheets we filled out by hand; the cash box (no computerized cash register); the winters when the old hot-water heaters weren't working and having to do my shifts wearing a coat; the various author readings we put on, both at the store and other venues; the Food Not Bombs people who borrowed our long table for servings; the noisy traffic outside the store; the potlucks and staff meetings; and attending conferences and events where we tabled. But mostly I remember many of the people who came in to the store, and helping them find books or information. That was the pay-off for me, not the discounts we received as volunteers, but meeting new and interesting fellow activists. Everyone had a story to tell, a tidbit to share, an author or book to suggest, an opinion to argue with, or a viewpoint to express.

Of the twenty five to thirty volunteers who regularly worked at the bookstore during the latter years, most tended to identify as anarchists. However, there were still many liberals, socialists, feminists, queer activists, environmentalists, native youth activists, Marxists, and marijuana advocates, all forming a kind of rainbow collective. It's remarkable to think how people with such divergent perspectives could work together (though not always smoothly) on smaller immediate projects like the bookstore, and also separately on their own larger, long-term visions.

Looking back, I'm struck by how Spartacus Books managed to carry on for so long without imploding.

Spartacus Books celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2003, only months before its fiery demise. A report by the Vancouver Fire Department, who discovered accelerant in the dumpster, concluded the official cause to be arson. The store lost \$125,000 in uninsured merchandise. After 9/11, insurance became too expensive to buy. Ironically, the bookstore had been recently experiencing good times for a change: public access computer terminals had been acquired, there was a waiting list for new volunteers, the manager received a pay raise, and a podium for author readings had just been installed.

Alexander Daughtry, who worked at the store almost continuously for twenty eight years still has trouble adjusting to what happened. "Everyday it hits me. I don't have to go down to the store. It's just not there," he said in a press release. "The diversity of

people who came into the store was amazing. You'd see university professors ordering books for their courses, anarchists putting on workshops, street kids using the free computers, students, parents and children, tourists who had heard of the store and had to come see it- there was something for everyone." Daughtry is now busy fundraising to help start up again in another location. Music benefits, film showings, poetry readings, kissing booths and raffles are all underway.

Time will tell if and when Spartacus Books will be reincarnated. If it happens, the energy, passion and commitment that made the bookstore so special will likely continue. The historical materials, such as campaign posters, photos, the store's internal diary and memos, news clippings, old sales flyers, mementos and Julie's painting-all of which bore witness to a unique chapter in Vancouver's radical history-are, however, lost forever.

**-Jonathan Slyk**

## christian angst by terry everton

JAKE WAS SELDOM HESITANT TO PARADE THE RESULT OF HIS STATE-SPONSORED SCHOOLING WHENEVER HE GOT THE OPPORTUNITY.

HEY, THERE'S NO SENSE IN THINKING FOR YOURSELF WHEN THERE ARE PAID PROFESSIONALS TO DO IT FOR YOU!





# Abu Ghraib and the Treatment of Prisoners in the U.S. Penal System

**L**ike the vast majority of people, I experience revulsion, utter disgust and a degree of sadness every time I hear of the abuse of the Iraqi prisoners which occurred in the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad on the radio, watch it on television, or read accounts in newspapers or magazines. The report of prisoners beaten to death during interrogation is particularly disturbing. It is abundantly clear to most people that the seven military personnel with the 372<sup>nd</sup> Military Police company are only the tip of the iceberg of the scandal as more of the facts of what happened at Abu Ghraib come to light. I find it ironic that the first military court martial to take place was for the person who photographed the abuse. The Arab world is outraged, in fact the whole world is outraged, at the images of depravity captured on film in Saddam Hussein's former prison of horrors, now used for the same purpose by the U.S. occupation forces, the "liberators" of the Iraqi people. Now only the most naïve can harbor the expectation that the prisoners of the coalition forces will be, and are being, treated accordance with the Geneva Conventions.

It may be surprising to some, but not to me, that two of the accused MPs involved are U.S. prison guards: Specialist Charles Graner, from a top security death row prison in Pennsylvania, and Staff Sergeant Ivan "Chip" Frederick, from a Virginia prison. While Graner worked as a guard at Greene County Correctional Institution, that prison was at the center of an abuse scandal in which guards allegedly routinely beat and humiliated prisoners. These are two shining examples of the sickness in U.S. prisons being exported to Iraq in the form of MPs with corrections backgrounds who are attempting to use the infamous Nuremberg Defense of "we were only following orders"; one can only hope it works for them the same as it did for Nazi war criminals—not at all. It is safe to assume that the other MPs these two cretins were deployed with looked to their experiences and judgment due to their past handling of prisoners; prison guards look to their more experienced colleagues for guidance and examples of proper conduct—the inexperienced led by the depraved. Routinely in the U.S., when prison guards are accused of abusive treatment by prisoners, the judicial system symbolically winks at their actions while dismissing charges and/or lawsuits brought by inmates. The cold, hard fact is that prison guards are at



U.S. military atrocity in Abu Ghraib.

best scarcely monitored and the abuse of prisoners is inherent in state and federal prison systems. It cannot be any other way: the slaveholding heritage in this nation is kept alive by the guard culture, where prisoners are thought of and treated as subhuman creatures, things, and animals (to list only a few of the labels I have personally heard used by guards).

Similar abuses routinely occur in prisons across the U.S. without any national attention, international outrage, or media coverage; sexual assaults, beatings, and humiliation of prisoners (both male and female), covered up and kept out of sight while those who earn a "living" directly from the misery of their captives chuckle as they continue to strip them of all human dignity. Prisoners have to endure their abuse for years, until it becomes the "norm," the treatment they receive going beyond the depravity of their punishment. If you have the slightest doubt about what I am saying, then check out the archives of the events at Brazoria County Jail in Texas, September 1996. A drug raid on inmates there was videotaped, and the images are comparable to abuse of the Iraqi prisoners: inmates were forced to strip, crawl along the floor while being prodded with stun guns, and dogs were let loose on several of them. Injured prisoners were dragged face-down back to their cells, much as one would drag a heavy garbage bag across the floor. Where was the national outrage then? The

hand wringing of the lefties in the U.S.?

Inmates are routinely stripped in front of other prisoners and in full view of opposite gender staff. Inmates are routinely humiliated, cursed, or beaten (some of them to death) in U.S. prisons. Where is the indignant posturing and bubbling outrage of the sensitive citizens of this country? Inmates are humiliated in ways finely honed and perfected, and done with skill and expertise, while those performing the abuse at Abu Ghraib were clearly amateurs by comparison. Their conduct was predictable; sadistic guidance and approval evidently trickled down the chain of command, encouraging their sadistic conduct. There can be no doubt about this. After all, the man assigned the task of re-opening Abu Ghraib under U.S. supervision, Lane McCotter, was forced to resign under pressure as director of the Utah Department of Corrections in 1997 after a mentally ill inmate suffering from schizophrenia died while shackled—naked—to a restraining chair for sixteen hours. Sound familiar?

There is a case currently pending in the 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals: *Johnson versus Texas Department of Criminal Justice*. Roderick Johnson was a sex slave, bought and sold by prison gangs, even after he appealed to prison guards for help. Various corrections experts are reputed to have carefully stated that they do not know to what extent the brutality and humiliation that occurred at Abu Ghraib was an intentional



strategy to break prisoners for interrogation, or if they were just random acts. What a crock! Politicians are saying it's time for the full picture of the Iraqi prisoner abuse scandal to be exposed. That will have to start with the abuse of U.S. prisoners in state and federal institutions; it's clear that this sickness was exported to Iraq.

When reports of abuse in U.S. prisons have merited media coverage, they have been given quick burps of attention and then quickly disappear. The public generally ignores these reports because they're desensitized by clever politicians trying to get more votes for being "tough on crime/criminals," and the leftists, who claim to care about those abused by government, bury their collective heads in the sand, hoping that such unpleasant things will just go away. In this country, beached whales and clubbed baby seals often receive more media coverage than prisoner abuse scandals, and seem to merit more concern from the left than severely abused—and sometimes murdered—American prisoners.

The Bush administration was clearly alerted to the abuse going on at Abu Ghraib, not only internally, but from the International Committee of the Red Cross. The administration remained silent about it until the story broke due to the photographs being posted on the internet. Only after this happened did the military publicly admit to investigating 25 in-custody deaths (possibly accidental, possibly not) of prisoners in Afghanistan and Iraq. We know when a story goes public on an international scale that it's time for the professional liars to try to salvage political and military careers—a mad scramble to pick fall guys to take the rap. Not only was the sickness of U.S. prisons exported to Iraq, but the reaction to public exposure from prison and military officials is comparable, if not identical—and equally predictable. Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice and the rest of the administration are expressing their "shock," "outrage," and "disgust" at this so-called Un-American behavior. But some of us know that it is all too American, a continuation of the dehumanization and genocide of Native American peoples, the enslavement and later Jim Crow segregation imposed on African-American people, the "resettlement" of Japanese-Americans during WWII, and the modern-day treatment of all prisoners.

The typical attitude that many Americans have, and what I have heard voiced in a prison setting by a captive who suffers borderline institutionalization or Stockholm syndrome, is the same as that recently expressed by Sen. James Inhofe (R. Okla.) to the Senate Armed Forces Committee: he said that he and some other senators are "more outraged by the outrage than we are by the treatment" of Iraqi prisoners. "The idea that these prisoners, you know, they're not there for traffic violations. If they are in

Cell Block 1A or 1B, these prisoners, they are murderers. They're terrorists. They're insurgents. Many of them *probably* (emphasis added) have American blood on their hands, and here we're so concerned about the treatment of those individuals." You can close your eyes and imagine this enlightened politician describing the prisons in Oklahoma the same way, especially during an election year. Imagine his outrage when watching busloads of Iraqi prisoners being released now that the scandal has been exposed. Prisoner abuse is a fine American tradition, a fact that can be attested by current and former prisoners across the country—if anyone would be willing to listen. More often than not, however, a desensitized American

public—including a majority of those on the left—turn deaf ears to what these people have to say; their stories of abuse are too painful to accept as reality, too difficult to consider the truth that human beings could do this to their less fortunate fellow human beings. The abuse of Iraqi prisoners was clearly amateurish. The most effective techniques for breaking minds and spirits, destroying dignity, humanity, and occasionally lives, have been perfected over many centuries. The professionals are here.

**Harold H. Thompson #93992**

Northwest Correctional Complex  
960 State Route 212  
Tiptonville, TN 38079

## Another trial for eco-anarchist Marco Camenisch

**S**wiss eco-activist Marco Camenisch, who is serving 10 years imprisonment for using explosives to destroy nuclear power station pylons, went on trial again in May, 2004 accused of murder and attempted murder.

Marco was initially jailed for his anti-nuclear actions in Switzerland in 1980. However in 1981, along with other prisoners, Marco escaped from prison. During the escape there was a shoot out between some of the prisoners and prison guards during which one prison guard died and another was injured.

Following his escape, Marco then went on the run for over ten years, carrying out a number of anti-nuclear actions (mainly blowing up electricity pylons) before finally being arrested in Italy in 1992. However after he was arrested it was suggested by the media and police that Marco may have been responsible for the death of a Swiss border policeman who was shot in 1989.

After his arrest in 1992 Marco was held on remand, by the Italian authorities, before eventually put on trial in 1993 where he was found guilty of carrying out a number of anti-nuclear actions in Italy and was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment.

That sentence came to an end in 2002 and he was immediately extradited to Switzerland to complete the remainder of his 10 year prison sentence.

Marco has always denied killing the Swiss border guard. And he has also always denied killing or injuring any prison guards during his escape from prison. However, Marco has been charged with the death of the Swiss border guard and the attempted murder of a Swiss prison guard in 1981.

These new charges against Marco can be seen as yet another attempt by the authorities to try and break Marco's spirit and an attempt to damage his international support base.

After all the years in prison, Marco, who defines himself an ecological anarchist, has never let the authorities change his mind about his political convictions. Instead, whilst behind bars, he has remained a political activist and, by means of writing letters, he has organized a far-reaching international network of political and personal contacts.

The prison authorities want to break Marco. They hate the fact he has remained steadfast in his political identity and they loathe his continued refusal to cooperate with the judicial authority. It is therefore no surprise that he has had these new charges laid against him.

It is up to the international prisoner support movement to make sure Marco receives all the support he can get and to remind the authorities that the support for Marco is as strong as ever.

You can show your support for Marco by sending letters (in English, German, Italian, Spanish or French) to:

Marco Camenisch  
Flughafengefangnis  
ZÜRICH-FLUGHAFEN  
Postfach 8058  
Zurich, Switzerland

For more information on Marco and his history, check out his profile on the web site: [www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk](http://www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk) or the multi-lingual site [www.freecamenisch.net](http://www.freecamenisch.net)

**Earth Liberation  
Prisoners Support Network**



# The Politics of Anti-Semitism

Reviewed by Lawrence Jarach

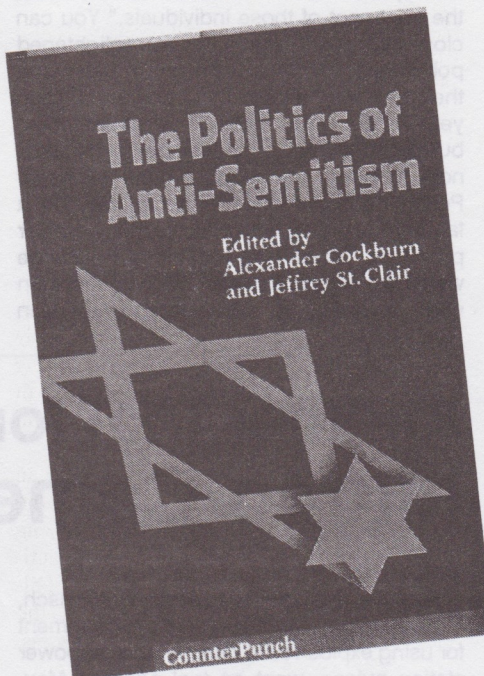
*The Politics of Anti-Semitism* edited by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair (CounterPunch, POB 228, Petrolia, CA 95558, [www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org) & AK Press, 674-A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612, [www.akpress.org](http://www.akpress.org); Petrolia and Oakland, 2003) 178 pp. \$12.95 paper.

**T**his book is a promise undelivered. It is not a political analysis of antisemitism at all; there is barely any effort on the part of the contributors to address the enduring racist hatred of Jews.[1] Instead, this thin collection catalogues various past and current horrors of the Israeli government and the knee-jerk dismissals by Zionists of any and all criticisms of those actions and policies—these dismissals being accomplished by labeling non-Jewish critics “anti-Semites”; Jewish critics are labeled “self-haters.” But what of actual antisemitism?

Modern prejudicial caricatures of Jews begin with the noticing of difference that Jews present to the Christian male, the normative subject of European history and culture. As the inheritors of that culture, Americans (radicals, liberals, and reactionaries alike) remain uneasy about Jews.

The term “Jew” can refer to a person’s religious affiliation: the Jew is one who practices, to varying degrees, the rituals associated with Judaism. At the same time it can refer to ethno-biological extraction: the Jew is one who is descended from other Jews. The general acceptance (Jewish and non-Jewish) of such diverse characteristics within one term understandably causes confusion. So there are Jews, who engage in some level of Jewish communal activity (whether religious or secular) and are recognized as Jews by other members of the Jewish community, and then there are “Jews,” who are known to be Jewish because of their Ashkenazi (Eastern European) last names, and who, in addition, are possibly thought to share a pernicious ethno-nationalist agenda. Uneasiness plus self-evident genetic Otherness combined with fear and/or paranoia usually results in racism. This is the core of modern antisemitism.

The appearance of Zionism (Jewish political nationalism) in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century added yet another layer of ambiguity to the mix.[2] The successes of this nationalist movement included the widespread acceptance of the Zionist assertion that Jews are a “race” or “nation,” in line with other



European nationalist ideologies originating at that time. Radical historian and anthropologist Jonathan Boyarin speaks of this confusion:

...I am not a nonresident Israeli—except in the Zionist dream. Nevertheless, radical critics continue to make the paradoxical claims that (1) Jews cannot be in a postcolonial situation because they are participants in a belated colonial venture, and (2) Jews are no longer a diaspora people because they now have a ‘homeland.’ Assumption (1) places Israel outside the pale of legitimate ‘new nations’; assumption (2) implies that the ‘Jewish question’ has been solved by the creation of Israel. Thus we see confusion between the boundaries of inside and outside, between a positive emphasis on difference and a frequent presumption of unanimity among Jews.”[3]

There are several antisemitic canards that retain their allure to modern audiences; they relate to each other and overlap to different degrees, depending on who’s talking. The one that is perhaps most difficult to disprove—unless it takes on obviously delusional qualities—is that “the Jews” or “the Zionists” have a secret (or not-so-secret) agenda/plan/conspiracy to undermine, if not destroy (through print media, Hollywood, the music industry, organized crime—the carriers of pornography, drug

use, general moral decadence—or outright military invasion) a target nation-state or culture.

Another is the allegation of “dual loyalty” or “treason” (this inexplicably shows up in the present volume in two contributions), which derives from acute anxiety over the nature of citizenship, nationalism, and cultural cohesion within an explicitly statist context. Questions of internationalism and race usually play an enormous role in this discussion, even though they are conspicuously missing in the essays by “Sunderland” and the Christisons (“Our Vichy Congress” and “The Bush Administration’s Dual Loyalties”).

The third, and perhaps the most enduring, legend is that there is an automatic, genetically based, cross-class, and international solidarity and singularity of purpose among “the Jews” or “the Zionists” to promote and extend the aforementioned agenda/conspiracy. Often a mere recitation of the surnames of the main suspects is enough to prove both the existence of the plot(s) and the solidarity of the plotters: Wolfowitz, Perle, Abrams, Bodansky, Foxman, Podhoretz, Horowitz, Bronfman, Zuckerman, Kristol (*et al*) make up part of the contemporary litany of designers, advisors, and spokesmen for the current so-called Jewish or Zionist conspiracy. This is the allegation that is the most ideological (when presented with a veneer of rationality—like when it’s referred to as the Neo-Con agenda) or mythical (when presented without one), and therefore the most self-evident to those who invoke it.

It’s clear from several of the essays contained in this anthology that some of these legends about Jews remain salient at least to some contemporary Leftist political commentators. Sprinkled throughout the anthology are the most common anti-Jewish allegations: disproportionate behind-the-scenes influence in domestic and foreign policies, and the highly questionable loyalty to a particular government (as well as that nation’s destiny).

The most reasonable statement appears in the contribution by Bruce Jackson. He writes: “Wolfowitz and Kristol are Americans who are Jewish and who are part of the American conservative right. Why single them out as Jews and then blame the rest of us Jews for them? Most of us don’t like or agree with those ideologues either” (56).

This is an excellent point, but one which



# The Politics of Anti-Semitism

Reviewed by Joshua Sperber

*The Politics of Anti-Semitism* edited by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair (CounterPunch, POB 228, Petrolia, CA 95558, [www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org) & AK Press, 674-A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612, [www.akpress.org](http://www.akpress.org); Petrolia and Oakland, 2003) 178 pp. \$12.95 paper.

I recently finished writing a book review critiquing *The Politics of Anti-Semitism*. The book, eighteen essays collected from Alexander Cockburn's and Jeffrey St. Clair's *CounterPunch* website and newsletter, is concerned with the phenomenon of good-faith critics of Israel being harassed with accusations of anti-Semitism, and the relationship between Israel, pro-Israeli institutions, and the U.S. I sent a draft to one of the book's contributors, asking if he thought I accurately conveyed his argument. After making some fair points about some of my essay's shortcomings, he suggested that I probably think that, "even facts can be anti-

Semitic." I responded in disagreement, but suggested that facts need to be contextualized to ensure understanding and so that they do not acquire anti-Semitic implications. I then received a response addressed to someone else saying that he has decided to ignore me since he knows "too many Jews like him (me)." Wondering whether or not I was being baited, I responded inquiring why he relayed this email to me, pointing out that he does not know me at all, and if he ignores me he should do so solely on the quality of my arguments, not on my involuntary inheritance. He wrote back in an apologetic tone saying that he did not intend for me to get this email.

This exchange, with a contributor to an anthology that promises to go beyond the self-interested rhetoric often characterizing the debates on Israel/Palestine and anti-Semitism, is emblematic of the book's failure to keep its vow. It is not to say that the collection is without valuable contributions.

seems to have been overlooked by the editors since this is precisely what many other contributors to this collection do. Some posit a singular Jewish agenda—identifiable, obvious, inexorable, and apparently bound by biological imperatives.

Perhaps the most bizarre contribution—but paradigmatic for an anti-imperialist—comes from Jeffrey Blankfort, who wishes to discover why "the Palestine support movement within the United States has been an utter failure" (99).

Blankfort wants to find The Reason, rather than the more elusive actual reasons. He concludes that there is pervasive collusion of most parts of the Left with Zionism. Like other paranoids, he needs to blame someone—anyone—else. Might this "utter failure" have anything to do with the internal problems and contradictions of Palestinian nationalism (which are shared by virtually every other Third World nationalist movement)? Problems like an uncritical celebration of a top-heavy PLO/PA bureaucracy, which has always been maintained by corruption, patronage, nepotism, and the active suppression of dissent. Contradictions like the descent into religious fanaticism represented by the increased popularity of even more authoritarian gangs like Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Anyone with an interest in authentic revolutionary self-activity would quite naturally bristle at the thought of

having petit-bourgeois bureaucrats or obscurantist reactionaries acting as their representatives. Blankfort's febrile rantings about the near-supernatural ability of the Israel Lobby to control US foreign and domestic policy shouldn't be allowed to deflect attention away from the obvious internal failures of the Palestinian liberation movement and its international supporters.

One of the examples Blankfort cites to show a Leftist pro-Israel bias concerns "[w]hen I approached board members of the Nicaraguan Information Center (NIC) in the San Francisco Bay Area and asked for the group's endorsement" for a protest he was helping to organize in 1985. "I received no support... NIC's board was almost entirely Jewish (112)." For Blankfort nothing else needs to be said.

Many of the contributors to this anthology at least pay lip service to the existence of antisemitism. What they object to is the equation of any and all criticisms of Zionism in general, and Israeli government policy in particular, as a manifestation of it. Most reasonable people would agree that this is absurd. However, there are some objections and criticisms that do indeed veer off into an irrational fear and/or hatred of Jews as Jews. Too much of the anti-imperialist discourse of anti-Zionism is replete with antisemitic caricatures that are similar to—if they don't exactly reprise—

Indeed, Michael Neumann's essay explores and exhausts the implications of referring to every condemnation of Israel as anti-Semitic, demonstrating that this type of "inflationary" usage of the term necessarily depreciates its value. Will Youmans also writes a strong essay explaining why "singling out" Israel for criticism is justifiable given its nearly unqualified U.S. support, and is in no way anti-Semitic per se—contrary to the assertions of Alan Dershowitz. But that these and several other good essays ultimately come off as filler reflects just how problematic the bad essays are.

Israel and the U.S. undoubtedly maintain a special relationship. Israel would be unable to commit its atrocities without U.S. support, and U.S. pro-Israel organizations are an important component of that support. These issues need to be discussed. What is so frustrating about *The Politics of Anti-Semitism* is the means it uses to do this. There are numerous valuable and long-

more traditional (pre-Zionist) Judeophobic slurs. Unfortunately, this anthology includes more than a few examples.

## Notes:

[1] I use the unhyphenated and lower case *antisemitism* instead of *anti-Semitism* to indicate that there is no actual philosophy or discourse called Semitism to which anti-Semitism is opposed. Antisemitism is a distinct political phenomenon, a product of modernity, which is unrelated to the marginally useful but often misapplied categorization of linguistic groups (which includes Semitic, Indo-European, Tupi-Guaranian, Finno-Urgic, Austronesian, Sino-Tibetan, etc).

[2] There have been diverse (usually personal) manifestations of a desire for a "return" to the ancient semi-autonomous Jewish polity on the eastern Mediterranean coast dating from the time of its final destruction by the Romans in 135 CE, but only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was this idea placed within an explicitly communal, ethno-nationalist, and obviously colonialist framework. Not all currents within Zionism were focused on building an ethnocratic nation-state, although that became the uncontested dominant tendency by the mid-1940s.

[3] "The Other Within and the Other Without," in *The Other in Jewish Thought and History: Constructions of Jewish Culture and Identity*, Silberstein and Cohen, editors (New York University Press, 2004), page 432.



utilized interpretive frameworks that the Left historically employs to contextualize geopolitical realities. Strangely, *The Politics of Anti-Semitism* jettisons these prisms in favor of ahistorical, individual actor-oriented, typically right-wing analyses. The book's worst aspects feature so little self-criticality that former CIA agents and a congressional employee, using staunchly nationalist arguments, are brought in to tell us just how badly Israel is undermining U.S. sovereignty and reputation. Did you know that AIPAC bullies our politicians? Well it's true. The Jews have somehow managed to corrupt the noble heroes that represent us in this once great democracy. George Sunderland (a pseudonym) goes on to warn that U.S. support for Israel is tarnishing the U.S.'s reputation in the Third World. And as long as the U.S.'s otherwise benevolent foreign policy is tainted by its naïve support for Israeli villainy, angry terrorists will continue breaking our stuff. This wretched display of confusion—mimicking the fascism of Pat Buchanan—is in dire need of the type of class-based clarity Howard Zinn provides when quoting the Revolutionary-era observation that “tyranny is tyranny.” It is only the most backwards jingoism that has one preferring to be dominated by U.S. corporate imperialism to Israeli “usurpers.” And it is only the most warped thinking that concerns itself over the good reputation of an empire that thrives on genocide and slavery, let alone attributes that reputation's “demise” to forces outside its control.

There most certainly are cases of pro-Israel organizations bullying U.S. politicians. But I'm critical of taking up this argument not because there isn't truth in it, but because it implies that without those forces U.S. foreign policy would function fairly in the Middle East. The U.S. was self-interested and murderous in its foreign policy before Israel's existence, so why should it not be now? This argument also exaggerates the power of government in general and Congress in particular, ignoring U.S. political-economic demands that would create an Israel if one didn't already exist. Politicians are not nearly as autonomous as this argument—focusing solely on the machinations of pro-Israel lobbies—suggests, and AIPAC has but a middle-level role in forming the institutional constraints delineating the choices that they do have.

U.S. support for Israel involves varied, often overlapping, institutional factors. These include U.S. economic exigencies such as arm sales, and the realpolitik needs to have a gendarme to repress Islamic autonomy to secure U.S. control of the region's oil. These pro-Israel institutional tendencies have created openings for sup-

porting ideologies within the U.S. culture industry. In the U.S. after 1967 (when Israel solidified and increased U.S. favor after undermining Arab nationalism via the Six Day War), ideological space has been made and filled with public concern for the Holocaust, anti-Semitism, and, by constructed

**The book's worst aspects feature so little self-criticality that former CIA agents and a congressional employee, using staunchly nationalist arguments, are brought in to tell us just how badly Israel is undermining U.S. sovereignty and reputation. Did you know that AIPAC bullies our politicians? Well it's true. The Jews have somehow managed to corrupt the noble heroes that represent us in this once great democracy.**

relation, Israel. Similarly, right-wing religious fanatics have begun lending great political support to Israel. It is unlikely that these reactionary nationalists would offer such passionate support to a foreign state if it did not already maintain a benevolent relationship with their own. So, as Peter Novick writes in *The Holocaust in American Life*, it is easy to overestimate the pro-Israel lobbies' actual power since most politicians merely have to go along with an overall pro-Israel flow that has not encountered meaningful institutional opposition. For instance, the few politicians who do criticize Israel are indeed attacked by AIPAC, but in criticizing Israel they are also opposing the interests of the military industrial complex, a conglomeration that gives twice as much lobbying money as the Jewish lobbies, and has a deep interest in maintaining U.S. funds to Israel.

Alexander Cockburn pursues this theme of “Jewish power” by criticizing detractors of Congressperson James Moran's remark that “If it were not for the strong support of the Jewish community for this war in Iraq, we would not be doing this.” For Cockburn, this generalization is unambiguously true, and cannot, therefore, be anti-Semitic. Any criticism of this sentiment, therefore, is a disingenuous rhetorical ploy to repress “the

truth.” However, many Jews were opposed to the war. So just who constitutes this “Jewish community?” In “Deal Breakers,” an essay in another anthology, *Wrestling with Zion*, Michael Massing notes that the two most influential foreign policy-oriented Jewish organizations (American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations) are composed of and led by individuals who are far more hawkish than U.S. Jews in general. Although these organizations pushed for the war on Iraq, support among U.S. Jews for that war was nearly identical to that of the rest of the population. U.S. Jews, Massing notes, “remain one of the most liberal groups in American society.” Moreover, Massing cites *Forward* editor J.J. Goldberg, liberal Jews feel weaker ties to Israel than conservative Jews do. Thus, “It's not what six million American Jews feel is best—it's what fifty Jewish organizations (or more accurately, Massing interjects, two [conservative] organizations) feel is best.” So it is not the Jewish community who wanted war with Iraq, but a distinct, conservative, disproportionately powerful self-appointed segment of that community. This hierarchical representation of community, complete with division of labor, is generally consistent with the organization of U.S. society as a whole. That Moran's description unintentionally evokes traditional anti-Semitic notions of a monolithic group with a single interest further presses the need for linguistic accuracy.

And the arguable reason that many U.S. Jewish elites did support the war on Iraq is because they believed that it would advance Israeli interests. For some this provokes the question of who the U.S.-Israel relationship most benefits and who is its dominant party? The “conventional wisdom,” writes Jeffrey Blankfort, places U.S.-Israel relations within the context of U.S. imperialism, seeing Israel as serving U.S. interests in the oil-rich Middle East. Blankfort reverses this thesis, claiming that the U.S. is a junior partner doing Israel's bidding to its own detriment. His explanation of why the U.S. is compelled to go along with this self-destructive arrangement is that powerful and single-minded Jewish forces have managed to dominate the U.S. media and government. Blankfort has admitted elsewhere that these types of characterizations are consistent with traditional anti-Semitic rhetoric, but now, he maintains, the world has changed in such a way that all of those crazy canards have become true (Goebbels and Streicher were merely ahead of their time). So it cannot be anti-Semitic to observe the truth. This typically right-wing



analysis (focusing on individual "puppet masters" as opposed to a combination of social-historical, class, and institutional forces) is terribly strained, requiring the removal of nuance and contradictory or correlating facts.

For instance, the U.S. media accords its usual propagandistic coverage to all U.S. allies, not just Israel. But when the media ignores Turkish slaughters of Kurds nobody suggests a pro-Turkish hidden agenda. Hence, Blankfort cannot distinguish between correlation (*i.e.* disproportionate Jewish representation in the media coinciding with favorable coverage of Israel) and cause and effect (*i.e.* favorable coverage of Israel being caused by the disproportionate Jewish representation in the media).

Contrary to Blankfort's pronouncements, the traditional anti-Semitic canards are no truer than ever before. They have always, however, had a basis in reality that was distorted out of all context. This basis is connected to the "peculiar condition" of Jewish history—one often characterized as a middle-man—indicating that Jews have often enjoyed relative power, but rarely entrenched, let alone absolute, power. This history is relevant to today and is worthy of exploration, but Blankfort's un-dialectical approach allows for nothing outside the realm of Manichean simplicities. He indeed has located some "facts" concerning pro-Israel influence in U.S. politics, but his obsessive focus on them obfuscates larger more telling facts. He has even announced in other writings possession of a nine-page "list" of Jews in high places. Whereas Aryan Nations keeps such a list on its website, insinuating that being Jewish is something sinister in itself, Blankfort takes a step leftward in declaring that he only has Jews on his list who ardently support Israel. However, many powerful non-Jews also ardently support Israel, but they aren't on the list because, the logic goes, they must be stooges of the Jews, not actors of their own freewill. For there is no other reason to support Israel than to promote narrow Jewish interests. In other words, U.S. support for Israel can only be a demonstration of Jewish domination. Alas, a crooked and clichéd premise leads to a crooked and clichéd analysis and conclusion, and its resemblance to age-old anti-Semitism is dismissed as an irrelevant coincidence.

One of the book's most dubious arguments, by Lenni Brenner, is that anti-Semitism is "retreating into oblivion." This is ahistorical rubbish. One cannot assert away a two thousand year old socioeconomic, political, theological, historical thread that has manifested itself all over the world in countless persecutions, exiles and, just sixty

years ago, genocide. A more compelling idea, which Uri Avnery's short essay touches on (and which Brenner addresses elsewhere), would not deny anti-Semitism, but would explore how Zionism, which is predicated on reacting against anti-Semitism, reproduces it. In *The Seventh Million*, Tom Segev explores Zionism's history of using anti-Semitism—its parent—to justify its most ghastly actions, while also using Jew-hatred's violent history to indoctrinate all Jews with a "siege mentality" whose only refuge is Israel, often at the expense of aiding Jews in immediate need whom do not wish to immigrate to "their homeland." As Philip Green writes in *Wrestling with Zion*, Zionists have, in fact, contributed to anti-Semitism by systematically conflating their nation-state with all Jewish people, constructing the former as the cultural-historical pinnacle of Jewish life. Israel is violent like all nation-states, but thanks in large part to its own rhetoric its violence is associated with Jews everywhere.

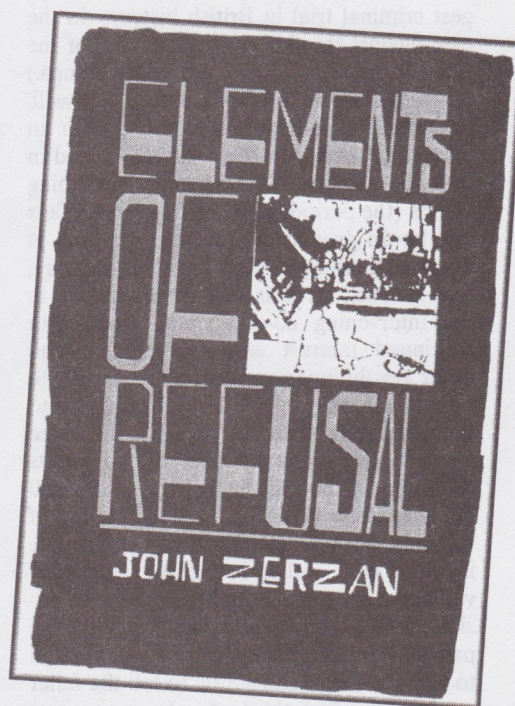
A rhetorical function of denying anti-Semitism is that it undermines one of Israel's primary justifications (interestingly, few other nations are so hard-pressed to justify their existence). The dominant Zionist narrative says that Jews are entitled to a safe haven not because of the past, but because the past in this case has consistently portended the future (which ignores, as Avnery notes, that Israel is one of the least safe places for Jews today). In downplaying the existence of anti-Semitism, this argument implicitly accepts the Zionist premise that anti-Semitism justifies Israel's existence and actions; its advocates are not contesting this Zionist axiom, but merely reacting to it by arguing that its prerequisites are not met. The resulting analysis is not only disingenuous, but morally and tactically backwards. The point should not be that anti-Semitism has been magically extricated from human history, but that its continued existence still cannot justify the violent displacement and ongoing oppression of millions of people. In the book's final essay Edward Said brings this matter up, bitterly asking why nobody questions why "Israeli security ought to define the moral world we live in?" But in order to pursue such a discussion not only does nationalism need to be addressed, the material and ideological forces that continually reproduce it need to be challenged. Instead of putting the Palestine/Israel crisis in global context and understanding that the only answer is a new global system, the book unpardonably argues that Israel—as the Jews' faction—is harming "our" U.S. faction. This idiotic line, coupled with analyses that lack nuance, subtlety, and sophistication results in a poor and disturbing book.

## Elements of Refusal

spells it all out. Here it is axiomatic that art, language, time, industrialism, number, technology, work and other aspects of our social lives—all hailed as the liberators of humanity—are, in fact, the co-conspirators of domestication and domination.

The overwhelming power of present-day ruling notions and the requirements of sheer survival leave most of us virtually incapable of recognizing how diverse are the real possibilities of life.

This is John Zerzan's first and most important book.



**Columbia Alternative Library**  
C.A.L. Press/Paleo Editions

POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205  
\$14.95 + \$2.05 p&h = \$17.00 total

Soon to be published in hardcover!



# The Christie File, parts 1 & 2

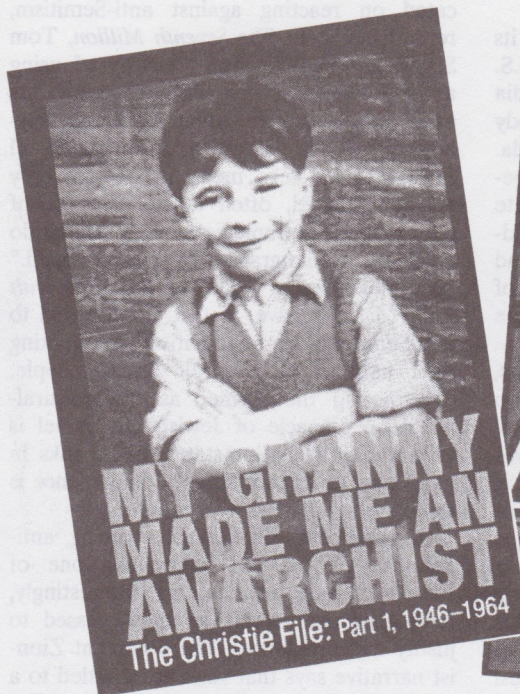
The making of an anarchist and the making of a "terrorist"

Reviewed by Lawrence Jarach

*My Granny made me an Anarchist; The Christie File: part 1, 1946-1964* by Stuart Christie (Christie Books, PO Box 35, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 2UX, England, [www.christiebooks.com](http://www.christiebooks.com); 2002) 257pp. £34 in U.K. & £40 Canada/USA postpaid, paper.

*General Franco made me a 'Terrorist'; The Christie File: part 2, 1964-1967* by Stuart Christie (Christie Books, PO Box 35, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 2UX, England, [www.christiebooks.com](http://www.christiebooks.com); 2003) 258pp. £34 in U.K. & £40 in Canada/USA postpaid, paper.

In 1980, at the tail end of some well-deserved notoriety, Stuart Christie was approached by a mainstream publisher to collaborate on an autobiography. (He had spent three years in Spanish prisons for smuggling explosives from France into Spain as part of a plot to assassinate Franco, then was a defendant—acquitted after the longest criminal trial in British history—in the case against the Angry Brigade, one of the first European urban guerrilla groups.) Assured that such a book would sell well, he agreed. It indeed provided him with an income of sorts, and the proceeds helped in the continuation of Christie's publishing efforts (the periodical *Black Flag*, pamphlets and books produced under the imprints of Simian, Cienfuegos, New Anarchist Library, and Refract). Events and developments in the intervening 20-odd years, along with continued interest among anarchists and other revolutionaries, spurred Stuart on to expand enormously his autobiography into three separate volumes covering the same years as the original. Some of the events discussed in the current volumes were still being scrutinized by the cops at the time of the original publication; some of the people involved were either in hiding, under surveillance, or in prison, making open discussion of their activities impossible. With the passage of time, readers can now be treated to Christie's skill and ability to tell the fuller stories. The first third of volume one sets the stage for the political development of the author, describing his home life as part of a minority community, through his early exposure to communist and socialist politics. Life in a working class section of a major industrial center is presented in brutal, and often beautiful, detail; what clothes were worn, what music was heard, what cigarettes



were smoked, what alcohol was drunk, what school was like, etc. The various expectations and assumptions of the dominant culture—and their accompanying pressures—are also examined. The writing is qualitatively better in the recently updated version, partly due to a natural improvement of Christie's skills over the past 25 years, partly due to the topics being so close to his heart. Many of his descriptions of places and people are so good that I often got lost in them, almost smelling the smells, and feeling the emotions. Some of the latter is because my own formative cultural and political experiences—although occurring decades later and in a different socio-cultural realm—included many of the same thrills, from reading *Mad Magazine* to listening to Tom Lehrer records (indeed, I had forgotten how important these years-long exposures were to my propensity for using parody and satire in my writing). While most autobiographies tend to focus on the personal and subjective elements of the author's story, Christie has written what amounts to an eyewitness social history of the various contexts in which he found himself over the years. This is especially true for the second volume of *The Christie File*, where his experiences among Spanish anarchists in exile in France are recounted. Readers are made aware of the attention

and surveillance to which they were treated by the Francoist political police, and the international intrigues in which they were involved, making much of volume two read like a spy novel. Each volume contains important appendices that go into some detail about certain topics that, had they been included in the main text, would otherwise have been awkward digressions. Appendix topics in volume one include a two-page summary of Franco-era anarchist guerrilla activities in Spain, a long discussion about the anarchist counter-espionage/defense organization *Defensa Interior* (including the part played by some Spanish anarchists in aiding the Cuban Revolution—before the crushing of the independent and libertarian opposition by Castro), and the framing and execution of two Spanish anarchists (which was an important turning point for Christie's political maturation and a determining factor in coming to the decision to aid the militant anarchist resistance to Franco). Volume two's appendices include material on Franco's Blue Division (volunteers who fought with the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front during WWII), activities of the Soviet secret political police in Spain during the Civil War/Revolution, neo-Nazi activities in Spain and Europe (led by Otto Skorzeny,

Continued on page 33



# Behind Fascist Lines

## A Firsthand Account of Guerrilla Warfare during the Spanish Revolution

Reviewed by Lawrence Jarach

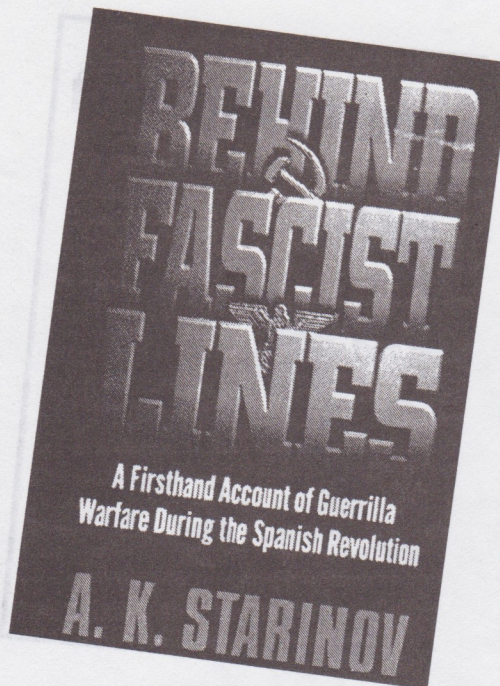
*Behind Fascist Lines; A Firsthand Account of Guerrilla Warfare during the Spanish Revolution* by A.K. Starinov (Ballantine Books, New York, 2001) 292pp. \$6.99 paper.

**T**his memoir is similar to others written by unrepentant Stalinists. As I mentioned to a correspondent who is interested in the history of the Spanish Revolution/Civil War, Starinov's book, like the autobiography of Dolores Ibarruri (aka La Pasionaria, who is incorrectly credited with originating both the slogan "No Pasaran" and the aphorism "It's better to die on your feet than live on your knees") and the official English-language Communist history of those events, might just as easily be classified as works of fiction.

While there are some recognizable historical figures (Soviet advisors and Spanish CPers) littered throughout the pages, the political analysis of the author is typically stupid, crude, and scurrilous—just what one would expect from a Stalinist. There is no information on the author in the book other than that she was a Spanish interpreter and eventually married the military advisor with whom she went to Spain. That advisor, in turn, is credited with all kinds of incredible guerrilla feats, even though it's also difficult to find information on him (other than his service to the Socialist Homeland during the Great Patriotic War). Posthumous memoirs are suspicious. Posthumous Stalinist memoirs are even more suspicious. The venom reserved for anarchists is much more forceful than what she gives to the fascists. The most notable examples:

The anarchists cause especially great harm, making demands that cannot be fulfilled in wartime, like the observance of an eight-hour workday... There are many demagogues among the anarchist leaders, even some of our avowed enemies... Shouting about anarchy and insubordination, the anarchist leaders carry out terror in their own units against those who begin to understand and see the necessity of rallying all antifascist forces.

...of course, conversation turned to the damage caused by the anarchists... They considered the war a secondary matter, that the main business was the establishment of 'free communism'... The anarchists are trying to stir up trouble here, too, but we have kept them quiet so far.



...there had been an anarchist putsch in Barcelona. They [some CPers] left when the Republican troops had gained control of the situation in the city and the rebels' hopes for anarchist assistance [sic!] were not realized.

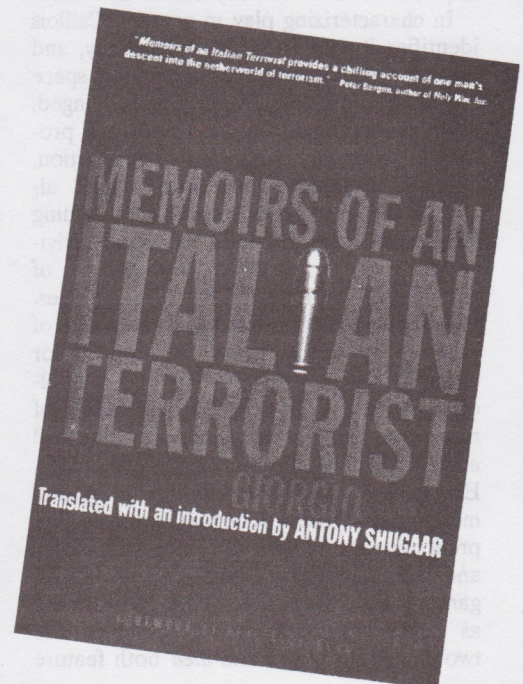
And occasionally she makes some slurs about anarchist militia commanders and fighters going over to the fascists at the earliest opportunity, which is, of course, a complete fabrication. But nobody ever said Stalinists weren't good at forging history to suit their own agenda. Like the Show Trials, the murder of POUM leader Andres Nin, and their allegations of an attempted anarchist coup in Barcelona, Starinov's autobiography is both fantastic (in the sense of existing in the realm of fantasy) and incredible (in the sense of not believable). Sometimes it's funny to read the paranoid rants of authoritarian creeps; this was not one of those occasions.

### Terrorist memoirs

*Memoirs of an Italian Terrorist* by "Giorgio" (Carroll & Graf, New York, 2003) 194pp. \$13.00 paper

**F**irst published in Italy in 1981, this memoir from underground (sent anonymously to a newspaper) discusses the life of an armed struggler from the time of his decision to participate in oppositional politics through his entry into clandestine existence. It's difficult to know exactly what to make of it. Part confession, part justification, but all self-referential, it is entertaining in a way that made me a little queasy. I found it both convincing and obviously filled with exaggeration. Not having enough background in the history of the extra-parliamentary oppositional spectrum of Italy during the mid '70s through the early '80s, however, I have no way of judging the accuracy of what "Giorgio" recounts. His descriptions of his personal transition from legal (although militant) protests through armed actions sound plausible, but there's still something about the book that doesn't quite sit right. Similarly, I can believe his shallow psychology of what underground life feels like, but it's just a bit too shallow. (Ann Hansen's memoir *Direct Action*, reviewed and excerpted in *AJODA* #53, has a

much more compelling way of relating the emotional toll of constantly living with altered identities, safe houses, and paranoia.) I would recommend reading this along with Sanguinetti's *On Terrorism and the State* for some kind of perspective that's more critical than that provided by the memoir and the translator's introduction.





# Ethnographic surrealism *Man, Play and Games*

Reviewed by Alex Trotter

*Man, Play and Games* by Roger Caillois  
(University of Illinois Press, Champaign, IL,  
2001 [1958]) 202 pp. \$14.95 paper.

Passing through the surrealist movement, Caillois formed, in collaboration with Georges Bataille and Michel Leiris, the Collège de Sociologie for a brief period during the 1930s. Caillois was also a student of the anthropologist Marcel Griaule, best known for his fieldwork among the Dogon people of Mali. This milieu of ethnographic surrealism was indebted to Marcel Mauss and his study of the gift economy, including the potlatch.

Caillois' cross-cultural study of the play impulse in human societies, even if altogether too conservative, forms an interesting pair with Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*, but with more emphasis on games of chance. Caillois shares with Huizinga an emphasis on the centrality of play to culture through its social functions. He quotes Schiller: "Man only plays when in the full meaning of the word he is a man, and he is only completely a man when he plays." I guess we can say amen to that, but nowadays we don't leave out the women. Some attention is given to the games played by animals, but the involvement of abstract and inanimate powers in play is seen as a strictly human invention.

In characterizing play in general, Caillois identifies it with freedom, uncertainty, and fantasy. Ordinary reality is suspended, space and time delimited. Property is exchanged, as in the potlatch, but no goods are produced. From the standpoint of production, "play is an occasion of pure waste," although this does not prevent it from holding large-scale implication in economic activity—for example, in the enormous sums of money spent on lotteries and betting games.

Caillois identifies four basic categories of play, grouped into pairs of affinity, for which he devises a Greek-derived terminology. There is *agon* (contest), consisting of rule-bound competitive games in which skill and personal responsibility are predominant. Examples would include billiards, chess, and most sports. *Alea* (chance) involves the predominance of fate over the will, skills, and qualifications of the players, as in games played with dice. Some games, such as poker and backgammon, combine the two categories. *Agon* and *alea* both feature



conditions of pure equality (equal chances of winning, either through luck or merit), and thus form a pair. In another category, mimicry, disguises, masks, and the playing of roles or make-believe are the dominant forms. This manifests itself in modern culture in such forms as theater, cinema, and the circus. The fourth category is *ilinx*, or "vertigo," in which the goal is the pursuit of dizziness, instability of perception, or pleasurable panic. Examples include carnival rides, mountain climbing, skiing, and children's whirling games. Caillois puts mimicry and vertigo together in a pair complementing the axis of *agon* and *alea*. In both of these pairs he sees one element as creative (*agon*, mimicry), the other as destructive (*alea*, vertigo).

Huizinga had decried the degradation of games in professionalization, mass public spectacle, and the atrophy of the play aspect along with ritual. Similarly, Caillois speaks of the "corruption" of play and games. These corrupted forms include, for *agon*, uncontrolled violence, trickery, and will to power; for *alea*, astrology and superstition; for mimicry, alienation and madness; and for *ilinx/vertigo*, derangement of the senses produced by excessive use of drugs and alcohol.

Where it gets interesting is when Caillois brings out his main thesis, namely, that play and games have been evolving increasingly

in a civilizing direction, with *agon/alea* gaining at the expense of the more primitive pair, mimicry/vertigo. He devotes considerable discussion to the importance of masks and shamanistic states of possession among native North American, Siberian, African, and Australian societies. Historical development follows a trajectory from *paidia* (the earlier form of play, integrated into everyday public life, spontaneous, exuberant, "Dionysian," which he associates with children and primitive societies) to *ludus* (increasing emphasis on calculation, contrivance, rules, and "Apollonian" rationalism and separation from "real" life). As Caillois puts it, every time "an advanced culture succeeds in emerging from the chaotic original, a palpable repression of the powers of vertigo and simulation is verified." Caillois acknowledges that, in an industrial civilization for which work is the highest value, play is a kind of beleaguered island inhabited by attenuated surviving practices from a primitive and forgotten past. This shows clearly in his discussion of hobbies, born of the Industrial Revolution, as compensatory activities for the boredom and other ravages imposed by the workaday world. But he accepts the emergence and triumph of civilization as ultimately inevitable and desirable. Caillois discusses the civilized empires—Inca, Assyrian, Roman, Chinese—as "rational" societies but not so much as societies stratified by rigid hierarchy and ruled by division of labor. He does mention class in connection with the emergence of democracy in ancient Athens. Caillois sees Greek society as wavering between *agon* and *alea* as opposing forms of justice—the privilege of inheritance, representing the law of chance, versus the democratic competition of merit. But he has nothing to say about real equality being much more evident in noncivilized or less civilized societies than it ever was in the classical Greek states.

Caillois demonstrates a fear of the "Dionysian" primitive. After demonstrating that the primitive forms of play survive in marginal, sublimated, and domesticated forms, he conjures them as a menace waiting to burst forth in "strange and terrible examples" that "suddenly precipitate a crowd into a monstrous frenzy," giving an odd hodgepodge of examples of atavistic surrender to vertigo and simulation, including the



# Paris, 1968, as seen by the author of *From Here to Eternity* *The Merry Month of May*

Reviewed by Adam Bregman

*The Merry Month of May* by James Jones (Akashic Books, POB 1456, New York, NY 10009, [www.akashicbooks.com](http://www.akashicbooks.com), 2004) 298 pp. \$15.95 paper.

In 1968, James Jones, author of the acclaimed World War II trilogy which includes *From Here to Eternity* and *The Thin Red Line*, was living in Paris as a student revolt and massive strikes paralyzed all commerce and transportation in the city. Like George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, James Jones' novel *The Merry Month of May* is a key intimate, first-hand account of a particularly thrilling chapter in recent European history from a celebrated outsider. Though, it was received with mixed reviews when it was published in 1970 and languished out of print for fifteen years before recently being reissued.

Deserving a place among the great books detailing the upheaval and revolution of the '60s, *The Merry Month of May* has an unlikely narrator in Jack Hartley, "a failed writer at a variety of forms," who's 47, divorced and the publisher of a review that's a rival to George Plimpton's *Paris Review*. This

very sweet, earnest, ordinary man hangs out with a group of American expatriates that includes his closest friends, the slowly dissolving Gallagher family. Harry Gallagher is a successful screenwriter, who has lost interest in his wife and instead pursues his sexual fantasy of sleeping with a pair of lesbians. Harry's son, Hill, is a film student and radical who wants nothing to do with his bourgeois parents. But both father and son fall for the same temptress, the African-American free spirit Samantha Everton, who claims to really be in love with Harry's uptight wife, Louisa.

Jones adeptly shifts back and forth from the Gallagher family drama to the revolution in the streets and both aspects of the story are equally compelling. It's an odd perspective that the reader observes the students' rebellion from Jack and Harry's cynical, fogey point of view. Harry, an ex-radical who moved to France to escape the House Un-American Activities Committee, is jealous and resentful of the students and his defiant son Hill, though he agrees to help them shoot a film of the revolt. Jack is a voyeur of the action, touring the occupied

Sorbonne and the Odéon and wandering around the barricades, but he also finds himself insulted by the students' "absolute righteousness," in particular that of Hill's girlfriend/comrade whom he describes, "She had a built-in inability, that girl, even to conceive—let alone admit—that she might ever, once, one time, be even four percent wrong. She looked at me the way some Communists did. She was the teacher and I was the pupil. She had awarded herself total moral superiority."

The novel also contains lively anecdotes such as the one where director Luis Buñuel is offended by Harry's home cocktail bar, which is crafted from a church pulpit, and attacks him with his own sword. And one of the book's most charming facets is the elaborate description of Paris, from the paving stones that students used as weapons and which were meticulously replaced by Italian specialists, to the complicated waiter hierarchy at Jack's favorite restaurant.

*The Merry Month of May* expertly captures Paris, 1968, the buildup, the politics, the street life, the excitement and the eventual disappointment and downfall.

Children's Crusade, Münster Anabaptists, the Ghost Dance religion of the Sioux, and Nazi Nuremberg rallies. To this collection he adds an event fresh from the headlines of the time his book was written—the Stockholm youth riot of New Year's Eve, 1957. He calls it "an incomprehensible explosion of a passion for silent and willful destruction." For him, the "rebels without a cause" show that modern society's established order is fragile, and that "the powers of vertigo are always ready to take over."

Caillois left surrealism's spirit of rebellion far enough behind that he was anointed by the establishment through his election to the French Academy. The general milieu of anthropology and sociology in which Caillois moved was tied to the rise of the structuralist (and subsequently the poststructuralist) academy in France, even if he himself is not easily described with those labels. His associate in dissident surrealism, Bataille, went through a rancorous break with André Breton. Caillois himself was criticized by Breton for his "philistine" dismissal of poetry, and by Aimé Césaire for his complacent trust in the superiority of Western civilization and

his blind eye toward its colonialist brutalities.

The formation of the Situationist International was contemporary with the writing of Caillois' book—the first issue of the journal, *Internationale Situationniste*, appeared in the same year. In that premier issue, the situationists, too, mention the Stockholm riot. For them, the inchoate outbursts of angry youth represented by this event were expressions of active nihilism reminiscent in some ways of the surrealist state of mind, but without surrealism's revolutionary hope and perspectives on culture. The upshot, they said, was that it was necessary to go beyond surrealism. An early publication of the Lettrist International, continued under the S.I., was titled *Potlatch*, recalling the custom studied by Mauss, which had also influenced Bataille. Despite this commonality of sources, the attitudes of the situationists toward play were quite different from those of Caillois. So far from going beyond surrealism, he actually fell behind it. Caillois wanted to construct a sociology of play and games, but had no interest in insurrection because he took modern society and its

notions of progress largely for granted even though, ironically, he declares in his book that "play is a total activity. It involves a totality of human behavior and interests."

For the situationists this was exactly why play had a revolutionary dimension to it: rather than being cordoned off, like art and subcultural activity, play could (re)conquer everyday life if individuals and communities possess the game with time and space by destroying the historically manufactured and maintained passivity, boredom, and enriched survival of modern bureaucratic capitalism that were partially described, but not seriously combated, by the likes of Caillois. The urge to live an adventurous, passionate life characterized by self-realization, communication, and participation can be realized through the creative and playful destruction of the work-and-spend world. Existing games of all kinds would take on a new life as they shed their present connections to commodity status, alienated virtuality, hobbyism, politics, and the fetish of professionalism.



# We have met the enemy and they are us: *Manual for Revolutionary Leaders*

Reviewed by Bob Black

*Manual for Revolutionary Leaders* by Fredy Perlman [under the pseudonym of Michael Velli] (Black & Red, POB 02374, Detroit, MI, 48202, 1974) 261 pp. paper.

In the Sixties, a formative time for Fredy Perlman, radicals liked to say—and liked to hear themselves say—that “if you’re not part of the solution, you’re part of the problem.” They took it for granted that they knew which was which. What they didn’t say, but needed to hear, was the corollary: If you’re part of the problem, you’re not part of the solution.

By 1972, Fredy Perlman was well aware that the left was, by and large, part of the problem. And he made it a part of his part of the solution to say so, and in the only words most leftists cared to hear: their own.

Fredy Perlman was never a sectarian or purist. Although his own political thought evolved in an ever more radical direction—from a sort of left-liberalism to a sort of Marxism to a sort of anarchism—he never cut off dialogue with those whom, if they would debate him in good faith, he could keep up a conversation with about what mattered. Sometimes he had to break with ideologues just because they demanded that he break with other ideologues. And, beyond theory, Fredy was always prepared to cooperate on practical projects (usually publication projects) with people he was not always in complete agreement with. Usually the people who throw around epithets like “purist” and “sectarian” are denouncing, not purism or sectarianism, but the failure to conform to their purism and to join their sect. Fredy was never taken in by such ploys. Then again, Fredy Perlman insisted on a certain rigor from those with whom he argued. If it was important enough to argue about, it was important enough to take seriously. He asked no more from his interlocutors than he offered from himself. For all his loathing of experts, to the end he appropriated their evidence, which he felt free to place in his own interpretive framework. And for all the increasingly subjective perspective he brought to bear upon ethnography and history, they always informed him. As had the left-populist C. Wright Mills years before. To be critical was not necessarily to be entirely dismissive.



## CHAPTER 1: “Generation of Revolutionaries”

The *Manual for Revolutionary Leaders* purports to be a primer. In Chapter One the author, “Michael Velli,” recounts the familiar story, the Marxist story, of how the development of the productive forces has created the material conditions for realizing “the modern model of revolution.” But unfortunately (continues Velli) the further development of the productive forces has engendered forms of resistance which contradict, not only capitalism, but the modern model of revolution itself. The capitalist mode of production was, for awhile, the liberation of the forces of production from the fetters of feudalism. But now it almost appears as if the modern model of revolution, formerly the form for the realization of the revolutionary forces engendered by capitalism, is itself a fetter upon the realization of self-activity!

The modern model of revolution is time-tested, verified by the Bolshevik Revolution and subsequent developments. In its essentials it consists of the leadership of self-appointed professional revolutionaries; their mobilization of the masses to seize state power upon behalf of the revolutionary vanguard—themselves—drawn, for the most part, from the disaffected but ambitious offspring of the ruling class; and the author-

itative promulgation of an ideology which explains and justifies why the revolutionary elite expropriates from the toilers, for their own good, the self-powers that the producers briefly recaptured from the previous elite.

However, this scenario has never been played out except in countries like Russia, China, and Cuba characterized by a relatively low level of development of the productive forces. Indeed it has rarely been implemented except by foreign conquest, as in Eastern Europe, or in Third World countries like China, Cuba and Ethiopia plundered by imperialism and/or economically underdeveloped. Ideologies of sacrifice, such as Marxism and fascism, and ideologies of statist control, such as Marxism and fascism, invariably come to power, when they do, in these backward societies. As Velli explains, the more modern a society is, the less amenable it is to the modern model of revolution.

It follows that aspiring revolutionary leaders in the developed countries paradoxically confront unforeseeable obstacles.

With the ongoing development of the productive forces, increasingly surplus value is expropriated, not by the traditional personified powers of capital—by owners and (perhaps) managers—but by the personified powers of estranged community: by the officeholders of the state. But whereas the consciousness of the direct producers continues to be formed, and transformed, by the changing relations of production, the consciousness of the officials does not, because they no longer participate in production and increasingly fail to understand it.

Police, therapists, educators, entertainers, professionals and “experts” proliferate, relative to the direct producers, for the same reason dogs lick their balls: because they can. And because they must: because they must counteract or confuse the consciousness of their own power over production which the producers are perpetually at risk of developing because that is the daily lesson of their own working activity. Overall, the consciousness managers have succeeded in inducing workers to regard their direct appropriation of the product of their own alienated powers as illegitimate (as “embezzlement,” etc.). But if the producers have internalized the ruling ideology of



exploitation, they have also exploited it. They want more money in exchange for their estranged power, but "the State cannot grant the very powers whose negation is a precondition for its existence." The necessity of diverting an ever greater proportion of the social product into consciousness control implies that less is available for the further development of the productive forces necessary to compensate the producers. More ominous still, "even while they internalize the negation of their own power, producers continue to enlarge this power in a situation where the power of the authorities depends on the experience, imagination and ingenuity of the producers."

What might appear to be a promising situation for revolutionary leaders is actually a perilous one. Individual attempts to realize self-power multiply, but they tend, not toward the seizure of power by revolutionary leaders, but to the negation of power as such—to "anarchy."

## CHAPTER 2:

### "Rise to Leadership"

In Chapter 2, Velli explores this trick which the cunning of history is playing on revolutionaries. The typography of the exposition changes; much of the text appears in italics. These passages are, in fact, quotations from revolutionary leaders and theorists. In the first (1972) edition of the *Manual*, they appeared without individual attribution. In the second (1974) edition, Velli supplies references to the Sources of his Thought in an appendix and explains his methodology:

M. Velli's thought is a synthesis of the ideas of the major revolutionary leaders of the age. These ideas are printed in italics in the preceding text. The contexts in which these ideas first appeared are listed below, in the order of their appearance in Chapter I and Chapter II of Velli's *Manual*. Velli has taken all of these ideas out of the contexts in which they first appeared and placed them into the single Thought of which each of these ideas is a mere fragment. Velli has reconstituted the project which unifies these widely dispersed statements, and thus completed each fragmentary idea, by leaving most of the original statements unchanged, and by changing the tense or omitting specific names of people or places only if these changes were absolutely necessary for clarity and readability.

Disparate as they are, the Sources, classical and contemporary, complement one another even—as they confirm that each utterance transcended particularity as a

moment of articulation of the modern model of revolution.

Many of the Sources are, of course, Marxist, including Marx and Engels themselves, as well as Lenin, Stalin and Mao. Velli also mined New Left literature for elements of his Thought. Among those

**What might appear to be a promising situation for revolutionary leaders is actually a perilous one. Individual attempts to realize self-power multiply, but they tend, not toward the seizure of power by revolutionary leaders, but to the negation of power as such—to "anarchy."**

drawn upon are Bob Avakian, Tom Hayden, Todd Gitlin, Stanley Aronowitz, Huey Newton, Bernadine Dohrn, Paul Buhle, Rennie Davis, Eugene Genovese, Stokely Carmichael, Mark Rudd and John Sinclair. Although the revolution they sought has not taken place, the subsequent careers of many of these leaders vindicates the practicality of the modern model of revolution just as surely as, in other circumstances, the Bolshevik Revolution did. Where the Bolsheviks took power collectively, the New Leftists have carried out what Rudi Dutschke called "the long march through the institutions," insinuating themselves as individuals into a variety of power positions. Among them are tenured professors, elected officials, lawyers, influential journalists, even businessmen (like White Panther-turned-stockbroker John Sinclair, who explained, "We used to call it revolution; now we call it business"). Velli explains—mostly in their own words—why the "rise to leadership" had to assume the form it did where the forces of production are as highly developed as they are.

Considering the welter of contingent circumstances which generated the many moments of revolutionary theory which Velli assembles, their coherence is extraordinary. Michael Oateshott has imagined the best—reconstruction of history as a "dry wall" whose stones are so well selected for shape and contiguity that it holds together without mortar. That's an unattainable ideal for the historian as for Velli, but the approximation is a tour de force: there's not much mortar in Chapter 2.

As the revolutionary leaders explain, revolutionary consciousness—in the sense of the producers' adherence to the modern model of revolution—does not develop spontaneously out of their everyday experience. On the contrary, that experience fosters anti-authoritarian attitudes which render the workers effectively unorganizable. Left to their own devices, workers who reject the ruling ideology are inclined, not to embrace revolutionary ideology, but to spurn ideology altogether. The modern model of revolution teaches that the role of the producers in the revolution is to effectuate the seizure of state power by the revolutionary organization (informed by the model) with its revolutionary leadership. The model is not, however, a naive reflex of the life experience of the producers themselves. Indeed, nothing is more inimical to working-class consciousness than belonging to the working class. The very exploitation to which they are subjected precludes their reflective analysis of the system as a whole. Besides, they lack the requisite education. Disaffected intellectuals formulated the modern model of revolution and it is the task of these radical intellectuals to convey it to them.

This is difficult, as the revolutionary organization is up against two sources of recalcitrance. First, the producers are wont to identify educated nonproducer intellectuals, revolutionary leaders, with the educated nonproducer managers and owners the producers regard as their enemies. Second, the revolutionary intellectuals, whose ideology derives from other revolutionary intellectuals, not from experiencing the production process, are wont to convey revolutionary ideology whose empirical bases, in ways unknowable to them, increasingly depart from the ever-evolving conditions of modern production. The producers may not know that revolutionary leaders are interpreting their work experience in terms of 19th-century British factory work, but they may well doubt whether revolutionary theory applies to their work experience, or, to be blunt, whether the ideologues know what they're talking about.

Nonetheless, there is no alternative to the modern model, for the only alternative is chaos and anarchy. The revolution is the realization as much as the suppression of capitalism and the forms of state-and-class society which it in its turn suppressed yet realized. The legacy of capitalism is to be reinvested, so to speak, not squandered on a party or potlatch or carnival or jubilee. We must purge capitalism of certain contingent excrescences and do what it does but do it better: maximize production, intensify



the exploitation of nature and rationalize the social discipline so haphazardly imposed under the anarchy of capitalism. The royal road to the conquest of the commanding heights of the capitalist economy is the conquest of the state. Already the state is so heavily involved in the economy (and vice versa) that the distinction is of mostly academic interest. And so Chapter 2 segues, so to speak, into Chapter 3, "Seizure of State Power." What is to be done?

## CHAPTER 3: "Seizure of State Power"

In the climactic third chapter, "Seizure of State Power," Velli augments the elaboration of the Thought with vignettes which concretize the difficulties faced by revolutionary leaders in taking power during a revolutionary situation under modern conditions. Suppose that the workers have occupied the factories and displaced the former management. Meanwhile the revolutionary government has decreed the expropriation of the same facilities. Although the precondition for both actions, viz., the overthrow of the previous authorities, is the same, they are otherwise unrelated and independent. The state, the official representative of the whole working population, accordingly dispatches revolutionary managers to take control of the factories from the direct producers on behalf of the direct producers.

In Velli's scenario, the revolutionary manager happens to be the former manager—historical experience suggests that will often be the case—but Velli does not assume that his former employees feel any animosity toward their old boss. They may well "treat the comrade manager cordially and respectfully." Unfortunately, they are unmoved by his assertion that the occupation of the workplace violates the rules and regulations of the plant. They explain that their occupation of the facility has so changed the situation there that the old rules no longer describe their activity. The manager may respond that now that the revolutionary organization has seized state power, the workers should resume work. But (they may remind the comrade manager) everyone else has also stopped working, and they see no more reason to return to work than everybody else does. Frustrated, the comrade manager calls in a higher official—one with, it may be, a distinguished record as a revolutionary which the workers applaud—but his raising the specter of anarchy is also unavailing. If the playful, relaxed, convivial social relations which have prevailed since the occupation are chaos and anarchy, these conditions are perhaps not so bad after all. Finally, the Comrade President of the Republic himself visits the

factory, whose workers "are of course flattered and honored to be visited by such an important personage." However, his appeal to law and order is again countered by the observation that the old law no longer corresponds to reality. And the charge that their selfish actions are subversive of the

## **The *Manual* distinctively marks a phase in Fredy Perlman's thought (not Thought): the moment of transition from Marxism to anarchism at which he settled accounts, as Marx and Engels would say, with Marxism.**

interests of the working class is (they gently, but firmly insist) belied by the fact that the rest of the working class is behaving just as they are.

Velli sets forth several such scenarios evoking possible problematic moments of the revolutionary conquest of power. In their variety they illustrate that difficulties attend, not only the classical Bolshevik model of the first scenario, but subsequent versions designed to update it: the "dual power" of the Party-state and the workers' councils, for instance, which Trotsky espoused after his expulsion from the Soviet Party-State. For instance:

A revolutionary organizer, a Party militant since well before the Revolution, regularly takes lunch at a restaurant formerly frequented by the wealthy, as the cuisine is still excellent. She becomes curious whether the restaurant is operating under the authority of a managing committee elected by a workers' council (the staff) or if pre-Revolutionary forms of direction and supervision persist. Although she eats in the restaurant every working day, she has never hitherto entered the kitchen, despite—or perhaps because of—a sign inviting diners to enter and assist in preparing the food. Her political work leaves no time for that, and she fears she may be embarrassed by being asked to help. Nonetheless she walks in and asks the first person she sees who the manager is.

The worker, who is rolling dough, bursts into laughter. "Here's another old-timer!" he calls out to the others. They explain there is no manager. How (the militant persists) is the restaurant organized? What about the workers' council

and the council committee? Aren't any. The pre-Revolutionary organization and staff? Long gone: probably "none of those people ever want to see a restaurant again." If something needs doing, somebody does it or it doesn't get done. Exasperated, the militant insists that there has to be planning and leadership for production to take place. "Can you boil an egg?" she is asked. The militant storms out of the restaurant and harangues the guests: "'All Power to the Workers' Councils! All Power to the Council Committees!' No one turns to look at her. People simply continue their conversations."

This hypothetical and others particularize the paradox of modern revolution. The development of the productive forces to the point where they strain the social relations of production they have themselves previously evoked—that can indeed give rise to a revolutionary situation. But such a situation is only momentarily an opportunity for the seizure of state power: after the masses have overthrown the old powers, but before they commence "independent creative activity as makers of history" (Lenin). The time to seize state power is when people have overcome their controllers but not yet their need to be controlled. That is why revolutionary leaders "want the socialist revolution with people as they are now, people who cannot dispense with subordination, control and managers" (Lenin). For if people overcome their fear of freedom by continuing to act freely at the point of production and everywhere else, they are unlikely again to relinquish their self-powers, even to a revolutionary government.

## **Velli Appreciated**

The *Manual* is a text unlike any other, and unlike any other by Fredy Perlman. It was Walter Benjamin's conceit to write a book consisting entirely of quotations, but it was Fredy who, partially but prodigiously, did it. It is eerie to read a sentence started by Hitler and finished by Ho Chi Minh, not only without recognizing either of them, but without knowing where one leaves off and the other takes over. The *Manual* is a unique hybrid of monograph, Bartlett's and short story collection—all fact, part fiction. Indeed it's even more of a hippogryph than that (and just as fabulous), as it is lavishly illustrated with images, many in color, many of them collages, which complement the text. By chance or design, the colors have the garish, other-than-lifelike look of early Technicolor or Soviet Life Today. The book, as always printed and published by Fredy himself and his comrades at Black &



Red, is handsomely bound (in—what else?—black and red) according to the highest production values.

For those readers too dim to notice the parallels, the Second Edition contains a List of Illustrations with page references to text passages to which they correspond. Nobody ever went broke underestimating the imagination of the American left.

As befits its pedagogic form, the *Manual* is relentlessly single-minded. It restates the Thought in numberless, numbing variations—arguing it historically, invoking ideological authority, and concretizing it with vignettes. Purporting to be a textbook for revolutionaries, it sends up, not only revolutionaries, but the textbook as a medium of instruction. By its punishing persistence the *Manual* reveals a thesis originally appearing to be, and acknowledged to be, paradoxical as so obvious that the reader sickens of his own obtuseness long before Velli desists from demonstrating it.

At the same time, the *Manual* is dialectical. Although the Thought in its fullness is implicit and potential in every fragment of its utterance, be it by Machiavelli or Marx, Hitler or Ho, only now (explains Velli) has the development of the productive forces created the historic conditions for the synthesis and definitive formulation of the Thought which informs the modern model of revolution. For now we may “appropriate in Thought the practice of successful modern revolutionaries who were more or less consciously realizing the Thought in action. Each fragment of the Thought assumes its ultimate meaning alongside all the others in the edifice of revolutionary ideology. The Thought is complete, and has only to be realized in existence what it is in essence. But while the Thought has arrived at closure, history has not. The continuing development of the productive forces can only erode the conditions for the revolutionary seizure of state power. Indeed, seizing power—en bloc if possible, but piecemeal if necessary—is increasingly necessary to hold their development in check.” (The contemporary reader might ponder whether this was not the failed function, imperfectly understood, of the Workers’ States which have collapsed in recent years.) Be that as it may, the upshot is that the modern revolutionary leader who has mastered the Thought should attend to the techniques of taking and holding power in revolutionary situations—to the acquisition and astute application of military violence. He must, writes Michael Velli (in the words of Machiavelli) “have no other aim or thought, nor take up any other thing for his study, but war and its organization and discipline, for that is the only art necessary to one who

commands.”

The *Manual* distinctively marks a phase in Fredy Perlman’s thought (not Thought): the moment of transition from Marxism to anarchism at which he settled accounts, as Marx and Engels would say, with Marxism. The recontextualization of quotations recalls “The Fetish Speaks” (1969), which the *Fifth Estate* later called “one of Marx’s better comic books.” The analysis of the alienation of self-powers elaborates upon “The Reproduction of Daily Life” (1969)—so faithfully, in fact, as to blur the borderline between the practice and the parody of Marxism. You can only turn something inside-out from the inside. The compilation of quotations by Fredy and Lorraine must have been a labor of hate which could only have been accomplished by people at once profoundly familiar and profoundly disappointed with how the American left had turned out by the early 1970s.

The *Manual* anticipates many (not all) of the themes which Fredy would elaborate until his death in 1985. Translations of Arshinov and Voline restored to historical memory some of the dimensions of the Russian Revolution which showed that the collective recovery of individual self-powers in a revolutionary situation is history, not hypothesis. The vignettes which valorize the *Manual* anticipate how Fredy would express his critique of civilization: the historical fiction of The Strait.

He’d made the point that he could confound the chapter-and-verse authoritarians with chapter and verse, and with much more. He beat them at their own game, but only to demonstrate that better games beckon. Fredy was not the first to subject Marxism to a Marxist critique—there were, among others, Karl Korsch, Bruno Rizzi and Cornelius Castoriadis—but he did it with all their erudition and with wit besides. Which is something else more salient in the *Manual* than in most of Fredy’s writing although it suffuses a lot of it: his insidious sense of humor. The misadventures of the organizers in Chapter 3 are comic skits in the finest tradition of Groucho Marxism.

Until recently, Marxism was the hegemonic ideology of the left—not because most leftists were Marxists, but in the sense that leftists staked out their positions with reference to Marxism. The workerism which it so often used to share with Marxism made even anarchism a sort of satellite. But even before the collapse of Communism, the anti-authoritarian critique of Marxism found its own ground. Fredy Perlman was one of the originators of the autonomous anarchist critique. It’s a better game, and any number can play. Fredy was a grand master-without-slaves.

# The UnAmerican Album

Reviewed by Dot Matrix

The UnAmerican Album by Emcee Lynx (downloadable mp3s from the web site: [www.circlealpha.com](http://www.circlealpha.com), 2004) 20 tracks.

The UnAmerican Album is an independent album released proudly on May 1, 2004 by Lynx, an anarchist rap singer based in the SF bay area.

While there is nothing exciting about the anarchist theory behind this album (the working class, feminism, Noam Chomsky and Malcolm X all get their props), Lynx’s voice is mellow and pleasant, and the music is not embarrassing. This is classic rap (despite the inclusion of Celtic strings here and there) mostly reminiscent of old Paris. The intro track “Proud to Be UnAmerican” could be uncomfortably compared to Paris’ song “What Would You Do”—except lacking Paris’ energy, Paris’ funny and poignant references to Public Enemy, and Paris’ follow-through on the Bush gimmick. The lyrics swing from personal (“I don’t write love songs”) to macho (“throw your hands up”) to ideological (“Movement,” “A Bullet in the Chamber,” and “Shoot or Stab Them”).

It would have been fun to write this review without ever mentioning that Lynx is white—but the most interesting part of this album is the intense self-consciousness of his transposition of pink skin experience onto traditionally Black style—most obvious in the track “dialects” where he defends his speaking/cultural style in what is clearly an on-going struggle for him. Aside from that, Lynx takes the idea of self-knowledge and grounding in national history (put out by civil rights era activists and more recently by many black-conscious rap artists—Public Enemy, X Clan, etc.) and translates it directly into white style national pride—reclaiming Celtic history reveals a clichéd and simplistic understanding of identity and authenticity. The world is full of cross-fertilizations; how do us mutts claim pride in heritage? Is heritage where pride best comes from?

The best thing that I can say about this album is that it is a perfectly listenable poke in the ribs to think about the significance of image: what it means to be an outsider and what it means to seem like an outsider.



# The Assassinations

Reviewed by Ben Blue

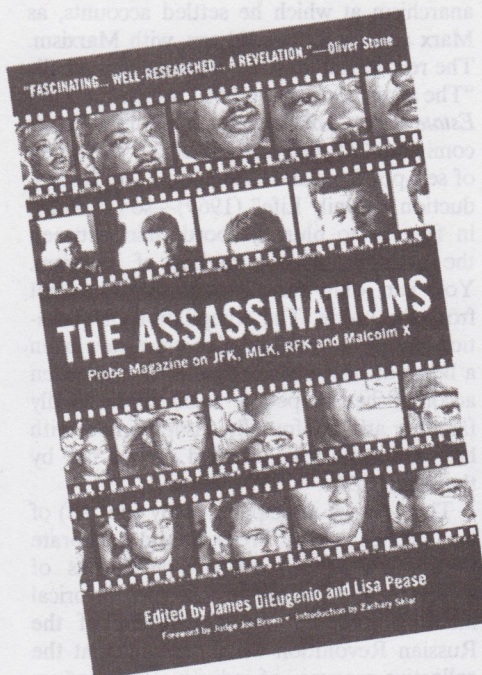
*The Assassinations* edited by James DiEugenio and Lisa Pease (Feral House, POB 39910, Los Angeles, CA 90039, [www.feralhouse.com](http://www.feralhouse.com), 2003) 677 pp. \$24.00 paper.

In the wake of reaction to Oliver Stone's film, *JFK*, independent researchers met to form Citizens for Truth about the Kennedy Assassination (CTKA) and to launch a journal/newsletter, *Probe*, to publish its findings. During its run, *Probe* was not sold on newsstands outside Los Angeles, and had a small subscription base. Feral House's new release, *The Assassinations*, attempts to reach beyond that initial audience by offering updated and never before published articles on the killings of JFK, RFK, MLK, and Malcolm X.

More than half of the book deals with the assassination of John F. Kennedy, divided into sections on "Past Investigations Declassified," "Who or What was Lee Harvey Oswald," "Conspiracy and Cover-Up Proven," and the "Failure of the Fourth Estate." These sections make clear the near omnipresent role of the U.S. intelligence community in the assassination and subsequent cover-up, including active obstruction of Jim Garrison's case against alleged conspirator, Clay Shaw, who received aid from the CIA and FBI in developing his defense. One of the more fascinating articles examines available evidence to demonstrate that Lee Harvey Oswald, and those impersonating him, were a creation of the American intelligence community, from as early as age thirteen. The two part article on James Jesus Angleton, head of the CIA's counter-intelligence unit for 25 years, expresses the psychopathology of the state as well as anything ever written by Sanguinetti.

In the portion devoted to Malcolm X, we find documentation of the FBI and CIA's close monitoring of his activities, including his decision to begin working in tandem with Martin Luther King to widen the civil rights movement into a human rights movement. Malcolm's long term strategy was to call upon heads of African states to recognize African American problems as their problems and to indict the U.S. at the U.N. Malcolm's appeal to the Organization of African Unity stated:

"Your problems will never be fully solved until and unless ours are solved. You will never be fully respected until and unless we are also respected. You will never be recognized as free human



beings until and unless we are also recognized and treated as human beings. Our problem is your problem. It is not a Negro problem, nor an American problem. This is a world problem, a problem for humanity. It is not a problem of civil rights but a problem of human rights...In the interests of world peace and security, we beseech the heads of the independent African states to recommend an immediate investigation into our problem by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights."

Many articles devoted to establishing James Earl Ray's innocence appear in the section on MLK. Perhaps most interesting is the verdict of a Memphis jury on December 8, 1999, in a wrongful death suit brought by the King family, that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated by a conspiracy that included agencies of his own government. James Lawson, King's friend and an organizer with the SCLC, testified that King's stand on Vietnam and the Poor People's Campaign had created enemies in Washington. He said King's speech at New York's Riverside Church on April 4, 1967 which condemned the Vietnam War and identified the U.S. government as "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today" provoked intense hostility in the White House and the FBI. Hatred and fear of King deepened, Lawson said, in response to his plan to hold the Poor People's Cam-

paign in Washington D.C. King wanted to shut down the nation's capital in the spring of 1968 through massive civil disobedience until the government agreed to abolish poverty. King saw the Memphis sanitation workers' strike as the beginning of a non-violent revolution that would redistribute income.

The section devoted to the assassination of RFK has an endorsement from none other than Sirhan Sirhan himself. Sirhan first announced his innocence in a 1997 appearance before a parole board. For those who have not researched this assassination, it may come as a surprise to learn that the evidence for Sirhan's innocence is even clearer than that of Mumia Abu-Jamal. In a nutshell, RFK was killed by bullets shot at point-blank range from behind. By all eye-witness accounts Sirhan's gun muzzle was never closer than one and a half feet in front of RFK. Tests have shown conclusively that the victim bullets matched those of a gun with a different serial number than Sirhan's. Sirhan has consistently and credibly asserted—even to the satisfaction of the prosecution's experts—that he has no memory of the shooting. The chief psychologist at San Quentin, during Sirhan's time served there, remains convinced Sirhan was hypnoprogrammed. The section includes a fascinating quote from J. Edgar Hoover, when presented with evidence of complicity by CIA asset and Howard Hughes associate, Robert Maheu: "Yes, we know this was a Maheu operation. People think I'm so powerful, but when it comes to the CIA, there's nothing I can do."

The question remains, what relevance does any of this information have to anarchists? A personal answer from this reviewer is that prolonged contemplation of the JFK assassination and the social, political, and economic forces contributing to it, led to my embrace of anarchism as a political creed. Whether the contents of this book becoming public knowledge would produce a similar effect on the American population as a whole remains questionable. What would become evident to the American public is the loose but clear connection between the intelligence agencies, upper classes, and right-wing organizations engaged in acts of state terrorism to eliminate leaders to the left of the political spectrum. Given the enormous popular interest in

Continued on next page



# Confronting Capitalism:

## Dispatches from a Global Movement

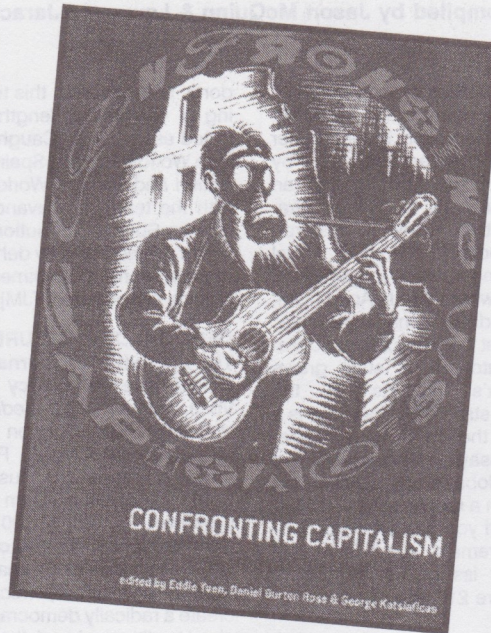
Reviewed by Dot Matrix

*Confronting Capitalism: Dispatches from a Global Movement* edited by Eddie Yuen, Daniel Burton Rose and George Katsiaficas (Soft Skull Press, 71 Bond St., Brooklyn, NY 11217, [www.softskull.com](http://www.softskull.com), 2004) 420 pp. \$16.95 paper.

There is an ongoing debate in some circles about the relevance of activists—defined (more or less sympathetically depending on who is defining) as people working to get other people to act, usually in the streets, in support of various types of issues, in order to create change. One piece of the argument goes that while the “change” tends to be reformist, the relationships that people build while they are working together can be meaningful. Another piece is that while activists tend to be self-righteous and act like they have the answers to creating a better world (not to mention what a better world is), the same is true for most political people. A third piece is the short term question—the “Oops, this isn’t working like I wanted, so I’m going to go do something else,” or the “I will use this experience to get my master’s degree,” or any number of other things people say once the glamour has waned—which seems particularly common among activists. However, when you look closer, it becomes clear that ‘organizers’ (people who have learned the relevance of—or at least how to talk about—longer term relationships and following through on things, as well as a little more about context) tend to be former activists. And the last piece (for right now) is about valuable skills that people can learn either from being at protests, or more commonly from doing the logistical work for them—from food to tech to tactical to medical. Which leads to the idea that Activism is one of the few places in Western European countries, where people can learn something about practicing warfare.

This is not to aggrandize protests, which are far more commonly self-congratulatory exercises in self indulgence and symbolism, easily ignored by everyone. But options are limited, and for people who take these opportunities seriously, masses of angry (or at least disgruntled) people dealing with the police can provide something vaguely resembling military information.

This is why *Confronting Capitalism*, an activist’s activist book, maintains some



interest. While most of the articles have the air of not taking seriously the protest part of the protests (“Why are the police so mean to us?”), some of them do have tactical analyses.

Most of the articles are as disappointingly leftist and internationalist as you would expect, which is clear from one glance at the titles: “Internationalism against Globalization”; “A Protestography”; “Seattle Was Not the Beginning”; “Zapatismo and Global Struggle”; “In Praise of the Seattle Coalition”; “Color Blind: activists of color bring the economic war home”; “Something Did Start in Quebec City”; etc.

It also seems indicative that anarchy doesn’t make a big showing. One of the sweeter of the rare appearances is Barbara Ehrenreich’s “Anarkids and Hypocrites,” her rant about the inanity of organizers punishing window-smashers, especially in the context of police brutality, and even more especially when one of the honored guest speakers is José Bové, the farmer who destroyed a McD’s.

Somewhat less interesting is Cindy Milstein’s piece lauding the organizing for the Quebec City actions, which she says “ushered in an explicitly anti-capitalist movement in North America—one spearheaded by anti-authoritarians (by and large, anarchists)” and was also a model for future

community organizing efforts in cities targeted for summit events.

Various articles merely mention that anarchists were present and/or influential. In case someone in the English-reading world didn’t know that.

**Technical difficulties:** 1. there are too many day-to-day accounts. There is definitely something to be said for following the summits chronologically in order to trace the progression of tactics, and some amount of real time story telling is appealingly personal, but this book includes too many in diary-style.

2. While I appreciate the non-leadership taken re: terminology (as well as how the varying terminology accurately reflects different perspectives on what is relevant about these events), the points become hard to follow. There could have been footnotes explaining that this article’s “globophobia” is the same as that article’s “anti-globalization activist,” etc.

**Pet peeve:** what is up with all the “it was successful because the media were nice to us”? Arguably, individual media workers might be sympathetic, but that sympathy is almost entirely irrelevant. The decisions to run stories, and the flavor of those stories, is overwhelmingly determined by multinational corporations. (You remember, they’re the enemy.)

## The Assassinations

*continued from previous page*

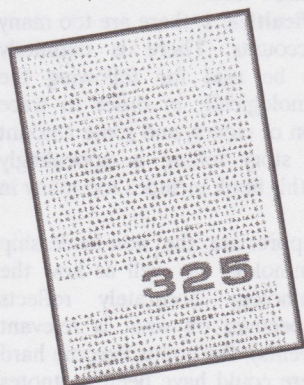
Oliver Stone’s *JFK*, Garrison’s bestseller *On the Trail of the Assassins*, and the History Channel’s most requested program: “The Men Who Killed Kennedy,” the assassinations remain an extremely relevant issue for many Americans despite mainstream media suppression. Perhaps the failure of Magic Bullet Theory supporters like Alexander Cockburn and Noam Chomsky to critically examine evidence of a state apparatus behind the killings contributes to the continued marginalization of the left.

Encouraging ordinary people to question the official story on these mysterious deaths may lead them to question the rationale of the military-industrial complex, the intelligence community, the mainstream media, and transnational finance; to question the whole network of institutions that perpetuate racism and poverty; and perhaps to question government itself. If so, *The Assassinations* serves as a good primer to start the conversation.



*Anarchy* is once again exchanging with all other anarchist and genuinely radical (anti-state, anti-capitalist) periodicals. And we will continue to try to review all such periodicals received in future issues. All reviews in this issue are by Jason McQuinn [JM], except those marked [LJ] for Lawrence Jarach.

**Publishers please note:** To ensure that your publications are reviewed in future issues, send all zines and magazines to our current reviewer address: C.A.L. Press, POB 3448, Berkeley, CA 97403, USA.



**325**  
unnumbered/August 2004 (e-mail: [325collective@hushmail.com](mailto:325collective@hushmail.com)) is a thick, unpaginated zine full of articles on insurrectionary activities, prisoner news and prisoner support, along with surveillance and prison technologies put together as a "collaboration of a range of people across Europe coming together in the hope of opposing the Bosses, and radically living our dreams of a better future, and not waiting for it, and never giving up." Articles cover Marco Camenisch, Mark Barnsley, Action Directe prisoners, the Marini trial, etc. Worth checking out! No price. [JM]

## A NEWS

**Information Bulletin from Greece**  
unnumbered/Jan.-May 2003. (Anarchist Intervention, POB 30577, 10033 Athens, Greece; web site: [www.geocities.com/an\\_pare](http://www.geocities.com/an_pare)) is back to a 12-page, English-language news bulletin chronicling the steady stream of Greek anarchist news and actions, especially against the Iraq invasion and "massacre that took place there." Send a contribution for a sample copy. [JM]

## ANARCHIST STUDIES

Vol.12, #1/2004 (Lawrence and Wishart Ltd, 99a Wallis Rd., London, E9 5LN, England) is a well-produced, academically-oriented (referenced) biannual 96-page journal covering a wide range of historical, theoretical and cultural anarchist themes. This issue includes L. Susan Brown's "Looking back and moving forward: The radical human-

ism of *The Politics of Individualism*" (giving an account of her discomfiture at the often nasty reception her book was given ten years ago by Murray Bookchin and others), an extensive analysis by Robert Graham aptly titled "Reinventing Hierarchy: The political theory of social ecology," and an even longer essay by Saul Newman titled "Anarchism, Marxism and the Bonapartist state" (arguing that the anarchist theorization the autonomous state grows from Marx's analysis of the Bonapartist state). Also included is a debate on the meaning and relevance of essays on anarchism and the anti-globalization movement appearing in a recent issue. Interesting journal if you can afford it. Subscriptions remain a bit steep at £20/year (2 issues); student subscriptions are £15/year. [JM]

## ASR

**Anarcho-Syndicalist Review**  
#38/Winter & #39/Summer 2004 (POB 2824, Champaign, IL 61825) is a 56-page quarterly promoting anarchist unionism. The Winter issue includes Jon Bekken on "Fighting over Time: Work without end, or time to live?" The Summer issue includes a good editorial by Mike Long titled "Anarchists for Kerry?" and updates on Argentina, Kosovo and Venezuela. Also included is survey of the dismal media coverage of worker's issues by Jon Bekken and a sometimes funny screed from Jeff Stein on "Engineering and Anarchism." This is the magazine for those who believe there is still some life in the ideal of anarchist industrial unions. Subscriptions are \$15/4 issues. [JM]



**COMMUNICATING VESSELS**  
#14/July-Aug. 2004 (POB 1124, Madison, WI 53701-1124) is a nicely-

done, 50-page zine, this time featuring a very good, lengthy, unattributed essay titled "Caught between Two Worlds: Russia, Spain, Modernization and Today's World," dealing with the tenuous relevance of Russian and Spanish revolutionary histories to our increasingly dehumanized modern world. Recommended. Donations encouraged. [JM]

## DEMOCRACY & NATURE:

**The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy**  
Vol.9, #3/Nov. 2003 (editorial: 20 Woodberry Way, London N12 0HG, UK; ordering: Carfax Publishing, Taylor & Francis Ltd, Cust Services Dept, 47 Runway Rdm Suite G, Levittown, PA 19057-4700; web site: [www.democracynature.org](http://www.democracynature.org)) is a 200-page academic journal (formerly **Society and Nature**) which seeks to create a radically democratic synthesis of traditions of socialist (economic), political and ecological democracy, placing it on the borderline of anarchist theory shared with anti-state environmentalist, directly democratic and libertarian socialist positions. This issue features a reassessment of editor Takis Fotopoulos' "Inclusive Democracy Project—Six Years On," probably the most sophisticated of the numerous conceptions of libertarian democracy promoted these days, with contributions from a number of scholars. Unfortunately, with this issue the journal is temporarily ceasing publication for two years while searching for a new editor and a new publisher. Look for this in the nearest university library unless you're independently wealthy. Subscriptions have climbed to \$76/year or £47/year. [JM]

## FIFTH ESTATE

Vol.39, #2 (365)/Summer 2004 (POB 201016, Ferndale, MI 48220; e-mail: [fifthestate@pumpkinhollow.net](mailto:fifthestate@pumpkinhollow.net) & web site: [www.fifthestate.org](http://www.fifthestate.org)) is a consistent quarterly these days, with a 64-page magazine format this time. This is a fairly high-quality "Reconsidering Primitivism" issue, featuring Derrick Jensen's meditation "Beyond Backward and Forward: On Civilization, Sustainability and the Future," Richard Heinberg on "Green Anarchism and Oil Depletion: How close is the collapse?" and Peter Lamborn Wilson on "Domestication." Also in the issue is a partial reprint of David Watson's old "Swamp Fe-

ver" criticism of militant primitivism, along with a meandering introduction longer than the reprint and a whole page of endnotes in which he continues his confused attacks against *Anarchy* magazine and *Alternative Press Review* for their sins of not backing the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, which he thought was just swell. Sad. Cover price \$3; yearly subscription \$10 (4 issues). [JM]

## FIFTH ESTATE

Vol.39, #3 (366)/Fall 2004 (POB 201016, Ferndale, MI 48220) 56 pages. The theme of the long-running quarterly this time around is unschooling. Most of the essays are decent (plus a couple of really good) first-person accounts of the vagaries of teaching and learning in an institutional setting. The editorial voice of FE, however, continues its downward slide into self-imposed irrelevance through an embrace of what chief contributor Sunfrog calls "ecumenical anarchism," which is merely a proud announcement of incoherence. The most notable example of this comes right at the beginning, with three editorials (by Don La Coss, Sunfrog, and Walker Lane) on the presidential election: La Coss maintains an uncompromisingly anti-voting position while Sunfrog ("Some of us will gladly suffer the momentary humiliation of casting a ballot") and Lane ("I am reduced to voting for a candidate who won't kill everything so fast") come up with all the same excuses for why supporting the legitimacy of a thoroughly undemocratic democracy makes sense to anarchists—who are supposed to want No Rule, not Majority Rule. Lane's descent into electoralism is personally annoying, since it was a 20-year old essay he wrote in FE that convinced me to jettison the pretense that an anarchist could vote in good conscience. Lane insists, in fine Liberal fashion, that voting is the only alternative to the apparent (to him) dearth of direct actions in the US; he then says "I know voting is a capitulation; at best a Kerry administration will. [provide] some breathing space for those suffering the most, allowing the real work of creating uprisings everywhere against the rulers to proceed." If his editorial were longer, it would fit nicely into our (unfortunately absent this issue) Embarrassments to the Anarchist Milieu column. \$3. [LJ]

## FREEDOM

**Anarchist News & Views**  
Vol.64, #20/Oct. 25 2003 through Vol.65, #17/Sept. 5, 2004 (84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, England; web site: [www.ecn.org/freedom](http://www.ecn.org/freedom)) is a very long-running, recently redesigned and much-improved, 8-page fortnightly tabloid of anarchist news and comment covering international, as well as British,



social struggles. These issues include an attempt in the October 25th issue to describe the origins of the militant Greek anarchist movement (along with an off-base critique that it's not syndicalist enough!), the start in the same issue of a short-lived "Green and Black Bulletin" page of "anarcho-primitivist news and views from the Wildfire Collective" (this lasted only for a few issues), a quick assessment of whether Britain should become a full member of the European Union in the May 15th issue, and a somewhat one-sided appraisal of Bakunin's revolutionary ideas by Iain McKay in the May 29th issue. Also included in each issue are some consistently interesting book and media reviews. If you haven't followed this newsheet before now is as good a time as any to subscribe! North American subscriptions are still £22/year (24 issues). [JM]

## GREEN ANARCHY

### An Anti-Civilization Journal of Theory and Action

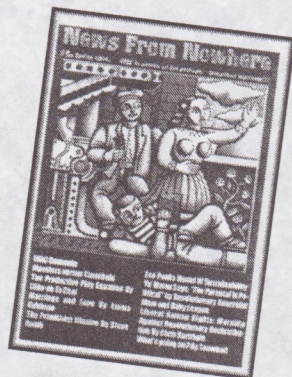
#16/Winter 2004 (POB 11331, Eugene OR, 97440; email: [collective@greenanarchy.org](mailto:collective@greenanarchy.org)) is now an impressive 78-page magazine with full-color covers, exhibiting a high-degree of layout skill. But it also cries out: "So many tiny words, so little white-space relief!" This issue features: Sky Hiatt on "Nostalgia," Bob Black's "Theses on Anarchism after Post-Modernism," John Zerzan on "Patriarchy, Civilization and the Origins of Gender," Kevin Tucker on "The Witch and the Wildness," and René Riesel on "Biotechnology: Public and Private." Also included are lots of news and "rewilding"/skill pieces. This magazine has made great leaps from its earlier issues, and has to be recommended highly. Sample copies are \$4 in the U.S., \$5-7 elsewhere; U.S. subscriptions are \$15/5 issues. [JM]

## NEW MOON JOURNAL

### Anti-Authoritarian Imperialist Supremacist Patriarchal Analysis and Perspective

#1/March 2004 ([new\\_moon@riseup.net](http://new_moon@riseup.net)) 8 pages. An ambitious title with a promising beginning. Seems like everyone is talking about elections this year, and the editor of this new zine is no exception. His opening manifesto is called "Elections, Permitted Marches & Denial" and hammers the illusions harbored by demo junkies. The bulk of this first issue is taken up with excerpts from Ward Churchill's "On the Justice of Roosting Chickens," cataloguing US military actions since 1991 (in case anyone forgot). The one major problem I found was in the editor's apparent obliviousness to patriarchal language—tough to overlook since "anti-patriarchal analysis" is part of the title of the zine. The

trouble appears in a footnote concerning the FTAA, IMF, World Bank, and other such projects; he says these institutions "castrate '3rd world' national economies and make them utterly dependent on the US for their survival." Wow. No price listed. [LJ]



## NEWS FROM NOWHERE

#4/Dec. 2003 & #5/Spring 2004 (POB 10384, Eugene, OR 97440; e-mail: [thenewsfromnowhere@yahoo.com](mailto:thenewsfromnowhere@yahoo.com)) is a very promising, 8-page tabloid advocating militant eco-anarchist perspectives and actions. The December issue is especially good, including "The War is Over if We want It," a reprint of Errico Malatesta on "Mutual Aid," Wolfi Landstreicher's excellent "Deciding for Oneself: Democracy, Consensus, Unanimity, and Anarchist Practice," Chris Wilson on "Anarchism: Against Capitalism, Against Socialism," an unattributed "Anarchafeminist Manifesto," and "Reimagining Space and Culture in the Resistance to Global Capital" by Chris Kortright. The Spring issue includes an update on Haiti, "The Productive Play Equation" placing Nonviolent Communication at the service of avoiding work, an old Emma Goldman essay on "Marriage and Love," Steve Booth's complaining denunciation of "The Primitivist Illusion," a somewhat whiny manifesto from RAMBL (Revolutionary Anarchist Mom and Baby League), and a worthwhile critique of "Liberal Human Rights: Morality against Revolutionary Redistribution." Copies are available free "in person or for postage." Send a first class stamp or two. [JM]

## NORTHEASTERN ANARCHIST

### A Magazine of Class Struggle Theory and Practice

#9/Summer-Fall 2004 (POB 230685, Boston, MA 02123) is a 48-page NEFAC magazine now with glossy, color covers, which should help it get a little more attention on newsstands, although it can still be heavy-going on the inside. This issue includes a decent piece on the U.S. cannon fodder industry by Stephen "Flint" Arthur, Wayne Price on "The Anarchist Case against Elec-

toralism," Tom Wetzel defending Michael Albert's Participatory Economics scheme, and Adam Weaver providing a dreary view of "Building a Revolutionary Movement: Why Anarchist-Communist Organization?," while the sad history of "Italy and Platform" is recounted by Nestor McNab. The cover price is \$4; subscriptions are \$15/4 issues. [JM]

## SOCIAL ANARCHISM

### A Journal of Theory and Practice

#35/Winter 2003-04 & #36/Spring 2004 (Atlantic Center for Research and Education, 2473 Maryland Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218; web site: [www.socialanarchism.org](http://www.socialanarchism.org); e-mail: [editors@socialanarchism.org](mailto:editors@socialanarchism.org)) is a 96-page biannual journal. The Winter issue features an interesting essay titled "An Ethnography of Nowhere: Notes Towards a Re-envisioning of Utopian Thinking" by Stephen Shukaitis and an at times amusing piece by Brian Morris on "Telling lies for a better world?" The Spring issue focusses on the Middle East with a bizarre essay by Bill Templer titled "The Impasse in Israel/Palestine: Moving forward toward a Cooperative Commonwealth" (in which he argues for "a kind of Jewish-Palestinian Zapatismo," among other strange things), a historical account of "The Anarchists, Zionism, and the Birth of the State of Israel" by Sylvain Boulouque, and a quick analysis of technology by Prole Cat in "The Anarchist Case for Moderation." Single copies are \$6.00; subscriptions \$20/4 issues or \$32/4 issues (overseas). [JM]

## THE @ WORD

#6/Nov.-Dec. 2003 (Somewhere in Seattle; e-mail: [info@theaword.net](mailto:info@theaword.net); web site: [www.theaword.net](http://www.theaword.net)) is a fairly new, high-energy, 24-page zine with some colorful covers. The issue starts out with a standard put-down of white leftist irrelevance for "communities of color," and includes a burnout story by Brady McGarry, a criticism of education as the path to revolution by Chris Pollina, and an interview with Derrick Jensen on "Revolution, Sustainability & Civilization." There seems to be a fair amount of white angst in these pages. But that's balanced out by a lot of attitude and slang. The cover price is \$2. No subscription information provided. [JM]

## Non-English-language materials received

### CNT

#### Organ of the National Confederation of Labor

#304/August-September 2004 (Pza. Tirso de Molina 5 2o Izq., 29012 Madrid, Spain) Articles on such di-

verse subjects as the Olympics and globalization (including a long critique of the militarization—à la NATO training—of security for the events), the economic crisis in the public university system, an editorial polemic against the statue of General Primo de Rivera (which commemorates his massacres in the Rif, not his fun-loving seven-year dictatorship), a report on several anarchist films shown at the 32nd annual Huesca International Film Festival. Plus the usual industrial news. 1.25 Euros. In Spanish. [LJ]

### EKINTZA ZUZENA

#31/Summer 2004 (Ediciones E.Z. Apdo. 235, 48080 Bilbao, Bizkaia/Spain) A longish article called "Counterinformation; Between the Virtual and the Real" on the problems of alternative media, concluding with five points: Establish continuity (not just bombarding readers with diverse sources of information); Clarify (with incisive analysis); Demystify (against "common sense" and accepted history); Foment an exchange of ideas that can mitigate against dogmatism; and Investigate. A look at the impact of Zapatismo in Latin America, a survey of legal versus illegal anarchist activities at the end of the 19th century, and an essay condemning the commercialization of punk rock. Also contains a long essay on technology. Music, zine, and book reviews included. In Spanish and Euskara (Basque). 3.5 Euros; subscriptions \$24. [LJ]

### LIFE OR CIVILIZATION

#1/Winter 2002-03 & #3/2003 (POB 4027, 10210 Athens, Greece) is a 16-page, Greek-language anti-civ zine. Issue #1 includes instructions for toppling tall fences. I wish I could read the rest. (Any Greek anarchists who would like to lend a helping hand with zine reviews?) Send a contribution for sample copies. [JM]

### SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA

#### Organ of the Regional Confederation of Labor in Catalonia

#320/April 2004 (Hospital 101, 08001 Barcelona, Spain) A brief statement condemning the Madrid train bombing, some brief mentions of various industrial horrors, extensive coverage of the May Day '04 Parade, plus a cultural supplement on translator, writer, poet, and libertarian university professor Agustín Calvo. In Spanish and Catalan. 1 Euro. [LJ]

### SU GAZETINU

(Via Buonarroti 2, 08100 Nuoro, Italy) This is a regular bulletin about prisons, anarchist prisoners, and prisoner support, focussed on Italy, but containing lots of information on anarchist captives in other countries in Europe. 1.50 Euros. In Italian. [LJ]





"Circle of Trees" by Tiffany Araluce.

## Miscellany from the Black & Green Gathering

The following are brief thoughts from four of the bay area crew who went to the Black and Green gathering in Oregon. The gathering took place in early August, 2004 in the southern Cascades. We wrote the paragraphs independently (you can tell from the excessive references to the kitchen crew—addressing either our ages, our focus on food, how much we are starting to think like each other, or all of the above). For a more complete report, the next *Green Anarchy* is sure to have the run down.

1.

The Black and Green conference did nothing to stem anyone's incipient ageism, at least regarding events-organizing. The people who were most interesting (with a few rare exceptions) were the over-40 crew in the kitchen, who didn't attend many circles (neither the theory nor the practical), but

were the ones called on when anything needed to be decided and/or done. This dynamic brings up the issue of power-through-logistics (how do any of us claim spaces in our communities), as well as how people manage to maintain their presence in these communities over years—perhaps most easily by finding a way to connect to the scene without depending on trendy topics or being part of the "cool kids."

The idea of purity was raised by this gathering, and how wildness is used ideologically and moralistically. This is not to point any fingers, because it is so hard to avoid falling into those patterns, but just to note that any standard of purity, of ultimate good, is ultimately unlivable, and in this context, seemed to contribute to many people acting like they were on a playground. The strength and purity of wildness, of "wilderness" (beautifully challenged by a workshop called "the myth

of environmentalism" that refuted the validity of how John Muir (et al) separated human and nature) seemed to mean that nothing that people could do in this national forest parkground was inappropriate—from making shrill, loud noises at all times of day and night, to eating food needed by wildlife (wildlife being squeezed on all sides by habitat reduction). Everything was allowed because the forest makes everything okay.

2.

The last time I went camping, which was with friends during the summer before my senior year in high school, it also rained.

That episode included hail pelting our sunburns as we tried to reset the tent that had fallen from too much water pooling around the stakes.

This time the camping trip included, besides a much milder rain, interpersonal



stupidities unseen since high school: cliquishness, prejudice against different-looking folks, a general aloofness to people not previously known. Here we were, all of us coming together in the beautiful woods of southern Oregon, all for the same ostensible reasons, and we were replicating the usual atomized behavior that makes capitalism so difficult to destroy. Sure, there were some great moments: swimming in the lakes; wandering around learning what local plants can be used for food, medicine, and containers; our funny shadow puppet show. But there was also inter-generational hostility—which was really unpleasant, considering that many of the older folks were constantly busy in the kitchen, making sure everybody ate (and ate well) and didn't get sick. There was a definite lack of "outreach" (for lack of a better term) among different cliques, making it virtually impossible for new friendships to be initiated, and I am as much to blame for this lack of cross-pollination as anyone else.

## 3.

Small groups of people who know, trust and work with each other. Years I've known these people. Are we insular? Inaccessible? Strategic? Because it takes consistent growth, the formation of personal as well as political relationships to get close, to be trusted—does that make us the dreaded "clique"?

We were rafting. Long dusty hike and heavy packs forgotten. Sun and fresh water on naked, shivering skin. Taunts, inside jokes and barking of dogs, broken up by wild splashing and shrieks of laughter. This is the fruit of our hard work.

Later we would have to talk seriously, trust each other's judgement and character. Support and protect each other from a sketchy interloper. This is also the fruit of our hard work.

We are protective but not closed. We are wary and curious.

## 4.

### The Puppet Show

The Bay Area was well represented during the week with a large section of the new *Anarchy* collective attending the gathering. We decided that a good contribution from us as a group (individuals within the collective also offered workshops that were well attended) would be a shadow puppet show. The show was entitled "John Z's Vision Quest" and it concerned a certain "John Z," a pair of broken spectacles, and the dilemma of post-collapse repair. The show seemed to be well received and is sure to be repeated at future events. Some of the highlights were appearances by Whitey McGuilt, the Hermit of the Long Haul, the Oracle of Detroit, and his guardian The Sphinx. Most of the jokes involved people who were either in attendance, or who the audience was well ac-

quainted with. (Surprisingly, David Watson was not on anyone's radar. Maybe his sun has set in the green anarchist world?) The fact that there are not similar efforts all the time speaks to the problem of anarchist culture. Outside of punk rock there appears to be a real dearth of it (unless you count David Rovics, which I do not).

### The Food Eaters

There are aspects of popular culture that anarchist gatherings appear to be able to challenge and others it very much does not. Take the division of labor question. We would like to believe (especially as opponents of work) that when there are things to be done that most people will rise to the occasion, especially in an anarchist context, to do them. If we are opposed to the division of labor it would seem a simple thing to fight it, when we are together, by not forcing, or even particularly encouraging, people into specialized roles. The gathering provided little hope here and not only were a limited number of people the "leaders" of just about every workshop but the same half a dozen people or so, cooked just about every meal for the entire week. Enter "The Food Eaters," those unusual creatures who appeared about 15 minutes ahead of the dinner bell, bowls in hand, more than prepared to critique the fascism of being asked to wash their hands and the tyranny of the legume, more apparently incapable of being of any use in food preparation, the infinite task of carrying things up the mountain (remember the event was 1.5 miles uphill from the parking lot!), washing pots and pans, etc, etc. The Food Eaters had a perfect representative in one member (who spoke up during a discussion about individualism) who stated "I am willing to work for me and mine, and in no other circumstance" and who was not seen lifting a finger for the anarchist event from which he was taking. We look forward to being neighbors to them ATR.

### The Intervention by Dot Matrix

There was a man. He didn't fit in. Actually there were four or five men who didn't fit in, but this one talked more than the others. He asked personal questions and wrote things in his notebook even after he was told not to. (These are practices, by the way, that are taught by mental health workers to people who have problems relating to other people.) No one knew him. People got a look at his notebook and saw that there were names and projects and ages noted down, as well as lines that could have been either the disturbing thoughts of a wingnut, or the codes of a cop. There was hurried, whispered consultation with the people who were named in his book—and people decided that he had to be asked to leave. Some people thought he was a cop. Some people thought he was too creepy. Some people thought the

week would be less interesting with him there.

So he was asked to leave. He cried, and tried to explain the situation as he saw it, to defend himself. The three delegates (two women and a man) explained to him gently that no one was interested in hearing his side of things, that the point was not to judge his guilt or innocence (nor did we feel capable of that). The point was that he had been too creepy for too long to too many people, and there was no longer anything that he could do or say to mitigate that in this gathering. It was pointed out to him (as if he were not a cop but a real human being; now *there's* a question) that coming into a community as a stranger requires a different kind of behavior than what he had been exhibiting. He didn't seem to hear that. The delegates waited and contemplated the potential for violence while he gathered his stuff. And waited, while it got dark and he rustled and zipped in his tent. And then walked the mile and a half to the parking lot, in the dark, carrying bags of his stuff that ripped and tore, while he walked with us, carrying a tire iron in one hand.

Later it was acknowledged that he was too obvious to have been much worse than a diversion from whatever real infiltration was going on.

I have argued in other places for an integrated conflict-resolving practice, in which each side of an on-going conflict is given time and resources to make their position clear, is given support, is assumed to have a valid experience. So how does the relentless (if empathetic) refusal to hear this man's story go along with that perspective? How can I believe that this intervention went down as well as possible? How does this real-life example shed light on the theory?

First, we are looking for a different way to interact with each other than the judicial model, where some authority (usually the group) is in the position of judging someone's innocence or guilt. This question was raised: How to prove that the exclusion was the correct action (and there was the knee-jerk reaction that we don't care how we treat "bad guys," ironically from one of the people who is frequently targeted as a "bad guy" by others in the scene).

The point is that we (the group) are in relationship with each other and either we trust each other, and can explain our actions to people who we are in relationship with, or we don't and can't, and nothing that is said or done or shown will convince anyone. In other words, we appeal to each other for reality checks, not to some abstract code of behavior.

Of course there is a danger in this (group think, mob rule, etc.), but it's the preferable danger.

Continued on page 31



# Urgent Communique of Solidarity with the People of Cuba

Prior to the call to commemorate the 50th anniversary, Monday the 26th of July, of the assault on the Moncada Barracks, we disseminated this manifesto.

**T**he Cuban Liberation Movement intends to coordinate and increase anti-authoritarian revolutionary activism, particularly in Cuba, and on the American continent in general, with the objective of constructing a more effective anti-authoritarian movement which actively participates in the real movement of the oppressed both for control of their lives and international counter-cultural resistance. We aren't just one anti-authoritarian group, much less a group of "chosen ones," claiming to represent Cuban anarchism. On the contrary, we are a network of collectives and individuals with groups in cities throughout the world, and we seek a more effective coordination between various currents that comprise Cuban anarchism today, from anarcho-syndicalism, revolutionary anarchism, anarcho-communism, cooperativism, communalism, green anarchy, all the way to libertarian insurrectionalism.

Cuban anarchists have actively participated in the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat since the time of colonial oppression. The best example of the struggle developed during the mid- to late-nineteenth century, headed by "El Grupo de los Tres Enrique" (Enrique Roig of San Martin, Enrique Missioner, and Enrique Creci). Already by 1888, this revolutionary anarchist nucleus had clearly outlined its position on issues of class and against state policy in the anarchist periodical *El Productor* through a series of essays entitled "La Realidad y Utopia," where they explain (in broad strokes) the global conception of our comrades at that time, in a climate in which the democratic, liberal, annexationist, autonomist, and national independence movement ("La Liberacion Nacional de Cuba") was dominant. The falsification of the history of the workers' movement is continually propagated by the state with the intent of disappearing the importance of anarchist ideals in the development of the anti-establishment struggle of the oppressed.

Cuban anarchists also arduously struggled against the Machado and Batista dictatorships. Against the latter, they fought on all fronts, some becoming guerrillas in the east and others organizing in Escrambay in the center. Others plotted and united in urban struggles. Bridges were established between

revolutionary sectors organized against Batista and militant anarchist anti-Franco Spanish exiles, by way of the partnership of Antonio Degas (member of the Cuban CNT) and Luis M. Linsuain, son of another distinguished revolutionary anarchist (Domingo Germinal, who died in Alicante at the beginning of the Spanish revolution). The proposals of the anarchists were the same as those of a majority of people: liquidate the military dictatorship and political corruption, create a more open field in which to enjoy freedoms, which would in turn allow for the possibility of ideological continuity that would prepare the way for a social revolution despite interventionist threats.

Today, 95 years later, the people of Cuba still live with the threat of Yankee intervention and suffer the terror and despotism of Castro-fascism, with the only difference being that the Castro system of repression is now more sophisticated and also more oppressive. The prisons continue to be filled with those who engage in non-violent opposition, and anti-authoritarian youth who rebel against constant totalitarian impositions and lack of freedom. The firing squad has returned as the punishment for those who engage in social struggle or for those desperate enough to try to flee from this absolutism. Inexplicably, what leftists like to call the "Cuban Revolution" is in reality nothing but Castro-fascism; they hypocritically continue to offer it their "critical support." We see an ample cross-section of the international Left opposed to the death penalty, military conscription, media censorship, mass trials against those who engage in social struggles (which are prosecuted under the euphemism of "terrorism"), gag orders against free radio, nuclear power, police spying and surveillance, and general state-sponsored repression. Yet leftists continue to support Castro and applaud all these disgraceful violations in the name of anti-imperialism.

"Critical support" has been, and continues to be, a slogan meant for external consumption, and is primarily based on a strictly totalitarian or Manichean way of thinking: "With the Revolution and Against Imperialism." "Those who oppose us are in favor of Yankee imperialism." Such people are automatically considered reactionary. This type of thinking is the same as that expressed by Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco.

Of course, on a global level, Castro-fascist propaganda has perpetuated this slogan. It has never been lacking scribes capable of obscuring Cuban reality with sermons and

parables. Whenever people denounce state crimes, they are immediately accused of being in the service of imperialism. The reality is abundantly evident and any curious tourist can check it out for him- or herself unless they chime in with the chorus of sirens.

At the heart of the international anarchist movement the positions concerning Castro's regime are no longer the same as some anarchist sects of the past that silenced Castro's crimes against our comrades. On the contrary, today the actions of our anarchist comrades against the Castro-fascist dictatorship can be heard loud and clear in any corner of the world. And we see how the fanatical supporters of tyranny grow fewer and fewer in the real movement of the oppressed. Fewer on the barricades of direct confrontation, fewer among the men and women who struggle in a horizontal and autonomous manner for the self-management of factories, of indigenous communities, fewer in the universities, in the neighborhoods, in our lives. One the contrary, those in favor of Castro's regime are found in the realm of reformism in the ranks of social democracy, in the ranks of those in favor of voting for "the Left," in the militancy of Lula's PT, among the sympathizers of Kirchner, in the Bolivian bureaucracy of Hugo Chavez, among the yellow PRistas of the PRD, among the opportunists of the Stalinist PT, among the ideologues of the Christian Democratic parties, among the never-ending multitude of bureaucratic organizations of the Left which meander between parasitic trade unions and organizations geared toward soliciting votes with the promise of being appointed to government posts, and even among fossilized student unions and acronymic popular fronts. In addition they find themselves in European and Latin American capitalist groups who today invest in the island and prepare us for a capitalism with a human face, all the while putting the brakes on the struggles for self-management as far and wide as the continent and the whole planet. Today Cuba's government, with all its trumpeted advances, is not the example or the path, not even for those in favor of it. The last prop of Castroism is an efficient and imaginative propagandistic mechanism. In 1992 we saw it functioning in Castro's trip to the Iberian Peninsula to commemorate, with a bunch of other corrupt leaders, the 500th year of European genocide, justifying with his presence 500 years of ignominies on the continent on behalf of "the Motherland" and



other no less cruel step-mothers. That was an opportunity in which we could verify to what extent "leftist" hypocrisy functions when it had to condemn all the governments present at that "celebration," skipping over or forgetting Castro's own contributions.

Recently, leftist hypocrisy has returned with Castro's visit to Argentina for the swearing-in of Nestor Kirchner in an open promotion of MERCOSur, as the human face of market capitalism.

Today, exactly 50 years since the libertarian assault on the Moncada barracks, we Cuban anti-authoritarian revolutionaries again return to reject the hypocrisy of "revolutionary" social democracy, camouflaged behind dozens of acronyms of demagogic groupuscules—some with the cynicism to call themselves libertarian—answering the call for solidarity with the Castro-fascist dictatorship, which oppresses and exploits our working class brothers and sisters.

Today we see a lack of historical memory in our people, with the confusionist nerve of those who follow the orders of the tyrant of Havana, evoking the lie when they affirm that the Castro-fascist regime has "always supported the national liberation movements in all parts of the world and has fought against imperialist policies." Mexican revolutionaries have suffered as few revolutionaries have on this continent; this is rewarded with the opportunism, utilitarianism, and shamelessness of Castro (who justifies himself with inhumane "reasons of state"). He has never supported revolutionary insurrectionists—on the contrary, he has always delighted in the very positive and fraternal relations with the dictatorship of the Mexican state, which oppresses and exploits the people of Mexico. Countless undeniable events confirm this; let's remember Cuba's presence during the 1968 Olympics, ignoring the call of the Mexican Left to boycott them, and in a cozy accommodation to the dictatorship that massacred hundreds (if not thousands) in Tlatelolco Plaza.

We could enumerate a long list of insults, like Castro's constant refusal to arm and train specific Mexican groups or his constant refusal to toast the mothers and relatives of the Disappeared of Argentina's Dirty War at the UN. We could also enumerate a long list of counter-cultural revolutionary movements that have suffered at the hands of the Castro-fascist dictatorship. But it will suffice to mention the Puerto Rican independence movement, large sectors of the Chilean and Uruguayan anti-fascist Left, the Brazilian revolutionary movement, Bolivian revolutionary syndicalism, etc.

And why not mention even more deplorable and embarrassing acts, like the betrayal of the liberation movement of Eritrea, where the Castro-fascist dictatorship sent Cuban occupation troops to squash the independent wishes of the Eritrean people. Plus

being at the service of Soviet imperialism during those lamentable years referred to as the Cold War.

Refuting all the demagoguery and cynicism contained in the call for solidarity with the Castro-fascist dictatorship would take a good hundred pages, but we can't allow the continual use of the Nazi method of perpetuating a big lie to the point of it becoming the truth. The big lie is that the Castro regime continues to construct an altogether more just society, making a priority of the people's interests and their most fundamental human rights—health, housing, education, food, employment. In this it is supposed to differ from all other countries under the Neo-Liberal agenda.

To speak of human rights in Cuba—where hundreds of political prisoners suffer in the state's dungeons, a number only comparable in this hemisphere to the prison population in the United States, where countless political prisoners suffer equally inhumane sentences and whose status as either political prisoners or prisoners of war is not recognized.

To speak of human rights in Cuba—when it's the only country in this hemisphere besides the United States where the death penalty is imposed.

To speak of education in Cuba—where access to university—level learning is tied to donations and strict compliance with the system and schedule of "voluntary" farm labor, and where students are not permitted to choose their own careers.

To speak of healthcare in Cuba—where hospitals are unsanitary and where poor patients aren't offered so much as an aspirin, while those with dollars can buy all the medicine they want. Or if foreigners and millionaires are treated, they receive the best and most advanced medical services, all in the interest of maintaining the tourist trade.

To speak of housing in Cuba—when thousands of families in overcrowded living conditions are evicted, where desperate people who squat in abandoned state buildings and installations are hauled off to jail.

To speak of decent food in Cuba—where food amounts purchased with Cuban currency shrink, where the only healthy food to be had must be bought with US dollars in the OXXO supermarkets at exorbitant prices.

To speak of employment in Cuba—where 27% of the population is unemployed and/or live off illegal street vending, prostitution, or self-employment such as bicycle taxis and as independent contractors and day laborers, and where they are constantly accosted by high taxes and police corruption.

To speak thus of Cuba—  
WOULD ONLY DENOTE A GREAT IGNORANCE OF CUBAN REALITY OR AN UNMEASURED COMPLIANCE WITH THE BOURGEOIS GANG WHICH HAS OPPRESSED CUBA FOR 45 YEARS!

Today the only way to pay homage to the

fallen of the 26th of July, the only way to reaffirm our class position, the only way to be consequential libertarians and revolutionaries, the only way of demonstrating our support with the people of Cuba in this new hour of imperialist threats, is and will always be direct solidarity with the people and not with the dictatorship. Fighting shoulder to shoulder, workers, students, intellectuals, men and women against the common enemy: capitalism. Whether it calls itself Neo-Liberalism or state capitalism, it is the same system that whips the Cuban proletariat.

**SOLIDARITY WITH THE CUBAN PEOPLE,  
NOT WITH CASTRO!**

**FOR LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM!**

**SALUD Y ANARQUIA!**

**Cuban Liberation Movement**  
movimientolibertariocubano@yahoo.com.mx  
**Translated by Andres A. Marino**

## Black & Green gathering report

*continued from page 29*

Any conflict-resolution process that engages both parties must rely on a) an on-going relationship on the community level and b) relationships with actual individuals (i.e. people have to have more than reputations). If this outsider does the work to become integrated into this community, to get to know people (which by definition means to learn more context-appropriate behavior), then he becomes someone who can conceivably be part of a conflict process that is based on real understanding and shared values. Perhaps this will only make him a more efficient cop. We must understand that we already have extremely efficient cops in our midst—the best ones are in our heads.

Of all the interventions I have been party to, this was the easiest on a number of levels. The provocation was clear and concrete. The process for coming to a decision was fairly painless; there wasn't a lot of controversy about the decision. The team of delegates had had various levels of interaction with the outsider, and dealt well with each other and with him. The outsider was only scary—not actually violent, and agreed to go with a reasonable amount of convincing. These factors undoubtedly interact with each other in linear as well as non-linear ways. The fact that it was simple, that people agreed easily, that the provocation was clear—that we can be good at getting rid of irritations—isn't an unequivocally good thing. While I agreed with this decision (as far as it went), we have to be careful about exclusions as the answer to our problems, and the easier they go, the more we have to be wary.

**by AI, LDH, LJ, DM**



## In these Times of Scoundrels Neither "revolutionary" nor "democratic"...liars!

Venezuela: *El Libertario*, #38

**F**acing the situation created by the referendum of August 15, 2004 to recall the president, the Comisión de Relaciones Anarquistas and its newspaper *El Libertario* call for a radical rupture with those candidates for authoritarian power, and instead present to the Venezuelan people ways out of the crisis based on mutual aid, direct action and self-management.

As has been the norm in recent Venezuelan history, the summits of power promote, again, the alleged importance of the noisy cat fights they show their bedazzled spectators. Using verbosity as grandiloquent as worn out by overuse during these last 5 years, both struggling political gangs proclaim that the next presidential recall referendum will be the mother of all fights, since both sides swear that now they have the opponent on the ropes, ready for the decisive punch that will determine their overwhelming defeat.

We have insisted plenty on the emptiness and dishonesty of this debate, but it is essential to continue expressing our criticism of the arguments that those competing for power can only justify with endless repetition. Thus, they insist that we must trust the electoral process and its delegation of power upon elected representatives as the only rational and realistic solution to collective problems, asking that we Venezuelans forget the sad results brought to us by that fallacious illusion during the IV<sup>th</sup> as well as the V<sup>th</sup> Republic. They repeat to exhaustion that participating in the elections is an expression of the decision-making power in our hands, denying the overwhelming evidence of our exclusion from the real decisions that affect our lives day to day, omitting that this fictitious amount of electoral power is exercised only under conditions strictly regulated by the ruling elites. This way, even the reduced space in which to question the state's power presented by a recall referendum is diluted when such an act is framed within a carefully institutionalized process within the norms set by authoritarian power for its greatest benefit. Besides that, we have witnessed, in relation to these norms during the most recent rounds of this struggle for power, how both have not spared ways to cheat each other and us, to the extreme that the president of the National Electoral Council accurately described when he said that this was a process characterized more by its deceptions ("tramparencia") than by its transparency ("transparencia").

The repeated abatement of all participation

and collective action regarding the elections reveals that deep down both Chavistas and the Coordinadora Democrática share a deep seated disdain for people's ability to confront and solve their problems. In spite of traversing a socio-economic situation that screams for organized popular mobilization to face the multiple calamities we suffer (unemployment, poverty, malnutrition, delinquency, crisis in public services, etc.) both sides limit their efforts to the electoral scene, appeasing their followers with ethereal promises to be delivered after their election or ratification. The success they have enjoyed putting social struggles to sleep with the electoral opium has been the greatest victory for this system of domination and repression we suffer, since after all, if people would understand that direct action and self-management could solve their problems without the need of a state nor of rulers supposedly indispensable, both gangs would be shown up in their shameful vulgar identity of authoritarian opportunists.

Neither "revolutionary" nor "democratic"...liars! The above idea is linked to the widespread and false dilemma of determining the supposedly "lesser evil" character that some of the electoral contenders might have. Those who attribute said condition to Coordinadora Democrática seem to ignore lots of evidence that render untenable any illusions about its use of power in a different manner than Chavez, except for the fact that it would abandon the pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric in fashion. Equal or worse is the case of those who assume that the current government is the guardian of social rights and achievements, attributing to the Commandant's and his minions' heroic testicles a decisive role in achievements that are not dependent on the cowardly spirit of those who hold power, since in the end organized popular action is the only solid and steadfast guarantor of any advance or betterment of the common good. The most regrettable outcome of having allowed this cheating logic to carry the day is the cost incurred in dismantling previous efforts of independent social organization, since all exits lead to the messianic helmsmen who—now or in the future—would run the state. In addition, in contrast to the effort, time and dedication required to build free and conscientious grass roots structures, both factions promote crony submission to authoritarian power as the easy and quick way out, when the truth is that this leads to the blind alley of demobilization and impotence.

Let it be clear: all the proposals being presented by those who wield or aspire to wield state power are deeply damaging to the Venezuelan people because—with different shades of demagogic pyrotechnics—they all seek to reinforce authority, to amputate any possibility of developing autonomous social movements and to impede the empowerment of people's rights. Whoever prevails, the processes currently at work, of militarization, repression of dissent and enlargement of authoritarian socio-cultural controls will continue their dark escalation which we have been suffering.

In this picture, we the anarchists reaffirm the proposals we have been insisting upon that are winning acceptance among Venezuelans already sick and tired of the cheating games of such scoundrels. To that 45% of voters depolarized and "neither-nor" ("nini")—but also to those doubters who continue to believe that the way to go is the ballot—we say that the crisis will not be resolved at the hands of actors who only aspire to power because of its advantages, be they Hugo Chavez or any other clownish anti-Chavez, as real changes for the better will only come from below and with the conscious effort of all. Many fear such change due to the panic that has always been sown by the system of domination, but to those who think so we say that—even scarier than what we build with everybody's passion and reason—is to continue expecting solutions from a power structure that has only deceived and fleeced us. We don't sell a miraculous formula, nor do we proclaim that under our blessed guidance the people "will cease to suffer," but we will always insist that the road to a better future will come from collective efforts and consciousness, with no need for fraudulent luminaries nor authoritarian institutions.

Don't let authoritarian power deceive you, nor encourage you...read, think, act for yourself!

Against blackmail and manipulation: direct action and self-management!

Let's build the authentic social power of decision-making through mutual aid and collective direct action!

Self-management is the real participation!

There's no way out with the state, nor with any authoritarian power!

GET RID OF THEM ALL!

Translation by Luis



# Anarchists in Turkey, 2004

**E**ighteen years have passed since publication of the first Turkish anarchist periodical *Kara (Black)* in 1986. In Turkey the anarchist movement is enjoying its "youth years" now, a bit confused about what to concentrate on and how to organize itself, but day by day growing and becoming more effective.

## Groups and movement in general

Anarchists are relatively more active in bigger cities like Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. On the other hand, in cities like Izmit, Mersin, Malatya, Bolu, Eskisehir, Antalya, Bursa, Denizli and Kayseri there are various anarchist collectives, circles, groups or "friendship groups" that are not as active as those in the metropolitan areas. The movement reached a peak in the anti-war demonstration on the 1st of March, 2003 in Ankara, at which time a discussion was also started on the matter of organizing. More than 400 anarchists were present in the "Kara Blok" (black bloc) at this demo, a great number for us! Participants included not only anarchists from Ankara, but also many from other cities. Debates on organizing that were held in Ankara and Izmir did not end up with any concrete decisions, but did help us to understand various tendencies. One faction supported a more flexible network type of organization, while another supported a federative type of organizing. Though we could not reach a consensus, some new projects emerged later on. In Istanbul, after the experience of "Kara Ev" (Black House) ended, new initiatives emerged. *Kara MecmuA (Black Periodical)* has published only one new issue since 2003 and the group seems to be less active. But other anarchists started gathering around periodical projects: *Kara Gazete (Black Paper)* staff have published ten issues of their paper/wall-paper. A group calling itself "libertarian socialist" has appeared and published an initial issue of its zine, *Liberter*. *Otonom X* periodical/group also appeared this year; this group includes anarchists from Izmir and Ankara supporting the idea of a federative type of anarchist organization. On the other hand anarcho-primitivists started publishing their own newsletter titled *Uygurliga Karsi (Against Civilization)* and organized a few direct actions. Anti-militarists also carry on their own struggle; they organized a Militourism Festival this year. The only anarchist publisher in Turkey, Istanbul-Kaos Publications, is still active.

In Ankara there are two different anarchist organizations. Ankara Anarchy Initiative, a synthesis-type of anarchist group, carries on activities. Some people from this group have started a periodical project titled *Inat (Persis-*

*tence)* and published the first issue. The group organizes weekly meetings and attends demonstrations in Ankara and elsewhere (even a small group went to Thessaloniki in Greece last year). The other Ankara anarchist organization is the Tacanka/KaraKizil group, tending to be anarcho-communist/platformist. In anti-NATO protests it was one of those walking in the black-red block with other anarcho-communists in Istanbul. Also, a libertarian-minded gay-lesbian group/periodical, *KAOS GL*, is located in Ankara and is operating a cultural center. Although there is not any anarcho-space in Ankara right now (there were two anarcho-spaces in recent years but both closed up), there is a café/bookstore kind of infoshop named Anarres which is a nice place for anarchists to meet.

In Izmir there are a few initiatives mainly dealing with publications. A4 Asymmetry Publications is a group of anarchists reproducing/photocopying leaflets on the theory and practice of anarchism. Another collective is publishing and distributing an anarchist newsletter named *Anarsizmir*. There are some underground/anarcho-groups in Izmir creating their own music, and a few even publish their own zines as well.

Groups are also active in other cities. The bimonthly anarchist art periodical *ImAsiz* is published in Kayseri, distributed country-wide and sold in about 15 different cities. In Malatya there is an anarchist collective named "Ozgur KarArt" (Free KarArt), publishing a zine with the same name. Mersin anarchists deal with ecological problems. In recent years there have also been a few direct actions in Izmit, and talks & film-exhibitions in Antalya, Bolu, Denizli, and in Usak, where anarchists faced state repression. A small group of libertarian communists live in Eskisehir. Anarchist and libertarian ideas also give inspiration to a few leftist groups; one of them, the Istanbul-centered student organization, Otonom group, declares itself anti-capitalist and anti-statist, but not clearly anti-authoritarian. It is mostly influenced by Negri's views.

## Anti-NATO mobilizations

On June 28-29 of this year the NATO summit was held in Istanbul. Anarchists and antiauthoritarians started mobilizing months before the summit time under the name Libertarian Coordination Against NATO, and a series of activities were held. The coordination released a declaration and operated a web-site with documents translated into nearly 20 different languages. On the 4th of April, marking the founding day of NATO, an anti-NATO picket was organized. Later, in mid-May, a Militourism Festival provided a

good chance for anti-militarist/anti-war and anti-NATO propaganda. Lots of stickers and posters were pasted up, leaflets distributed, and a talk on "Capitalism, NATO and the Counter Movement" was organized. The first FNB (Food Not Bombs) action in the history of Turkey was held on the 5th of June, under the name Food Not Bombs/NATO, in front of Taksim-McDonalds. An *Activist Guide* was prepared in Izmir by A4 Asymmetry Publications and leaflets & stickers were printed in Ankara by the Ankara Anarchy Initiative. A huge anti-NATO demo on the 27th of June and following two days was held with the solidarity of anarchists country-wide. About 300 to 400 anarchists walked in a black bloc and a black-red block on June 27th. In the following days there were some clashes with cops but no anarchists were arrested. For the first time anarchists became a real force in the streets and even leftist periodicals/papers mentioned anarchists' participation in anti-NATO protests.

-Batur Ozdinc (Ankara Anarchy Initiative)

## The Christie File

continued from page 16

"Hitler's Commando," who had saved Mussolini in 1943), plus 15 pages of internal French political police reports on how to deal with Spanish anarchists (from surveillance through interrogation goals). Most of these appendices could stand on their own as individual pamphlets.

Details abound throughout, and are presented without what I associate with the worst autobiographies: an inflated sense of self-importance, selective memory, and a tendency to ignore things that might make the author look unattractive. Christie has written, on the other hand, an engaging personal history supplemented with plenty of regular history (or is that a regular history supplemented with personal experiences?) firmly placing his political development within Spanish, French, and British events that took place between 1946 and 1967. One detail will satisfy anyone who has wondered about the long-running feud between the British anarchist periodicals *Black Flag* and *Freedom*; the reasons are explained here (but I won't give it away). Neither a scoundrel nor a saint, Christie presents himself as totally human: innocent, courageous, stubborn, and ultimately a principled opponent of all forms of oppression. I can't wait for the release of volume three: *Edward Heath made me Angry*.



# Anarchists



Mark Neville



# Preliminary Theses for a Longer Discussion on Essentialism

## and the Problem of Identity Politics

Lawrence Jarach

**E**ssentialism is the idea that there exists some detectable and objective core quality of particular groups of people that is inherent, eternal, and unalterable; groupings can be categorized according to these qualities of essence, which are based on such problematic criteria as gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, and class. These external qualities are almost always marked by visual cues, making the categories more obvious and/or easier to notice. These qualities contain social and—more importantly from an antiauthoritarian perspective—hierarchical significance to those marking the cues and those marked by the cues: sexism, in the case of gender; racism in the case of skin tone; the unwanted attention of authorities in the case of any and all different looking/acting people. Racism, sexism, classism, and most other forms of historical oppression are ideologies and policies maintained and justified by essentialism.

2.

For a person or group of people on the receiving end of racism and sexism (etc.), essentialism can appear to be a powerful defensive perspective and

counter-narrative. Rather than promoting categories of denigration and subordination, the counter-essentialist discourse of Identity Politics attempts to invert the historical categories of oppression into categories of celebration. This is often initiated by appropriating insults and turning them into acceptable, even honorable, labels. What had once been intended to harm the Other thereby becomes a way to show pride in the Group Self. Keeping with the inversion process, the counter-essentialist often merely turns the categories of Otherness upside-down, making visually identifiable members of the Oppressor group into enemies. A sense of belonging either to a group that has oppressed or been oppressed is immaterial—essentialism is not the exclusive domain of oppressors.

3.

The discourse of counter-essentialism includes the ideologies of innocence and victimization, which can quickly transform an identity based on the history of shared oppression into a posture of superiority. Counter-essentialism supposedly proves that the victim is eternally innocent, so victims' actions and reactions are forever beyond reproach; all good Christians know that suffering is ennobling. Op-

pression is never the result of anything the victim has actually done to the Oppressor, so whatever strategies of resistance the victim chooses are legitimate. Self-defense is its own justification.

4.

The adherents of Identity Politics rarely—if ever—question the criteria leading to victimization. They can't conceive of the possibility that the elevation of any particular culturally constructed marker into a significant value-laden category could lead to oppression. Unlike Oppressor essentialists, counter-essentialists ignore the complexities of relations of power (which are conditional and contingent); but like Oppressor essentialists, they revel in the smug self-assurance that their Identity is static, independent, and eternal. Essentialists create and maintain their own privileges through the institutionalization of power; counter-essentialists through the institutionalization of innocence.

5.

Franz Fanon, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Patrice Lumumba, and many other Third World national liberationists even less reputable to anarchists (like Castro, Tito, and Mao) inspired



generations of self-described revolutionaries in the Imperial Metropole to fight against discrimination, racism, colonialism, and oppression. That all these Third World nationalists thought, wrote, and acted within a statist—and usually Marxist-Leninist, which is to say Stalinist—framework is also clear. Despite this, as successful anti-imperialists, they retain a certain appeal and credibility among anarchists. After all, what anarchist would be in favor of imperialism?

6.

The philosophy and vision of self-determination requires an appeal to world political opinion; it is as if so-called revolutionary nationalists wanted to say: "We are mature enough to run our own governments, make treaties, engage in trade with the established states of the world, and control troublesome dissidents." On a certain level, these soon-to-be national leaders accepted and promoted the justification for colonialism—namely that the natives were too child-like or uneducated to determine the proper exploitation of the natural resources of their lands. They wanted to show—either through the force of morality (as in the totally mythologized case of Gandhi) or the force of arms (as in the totally romanticized case of Che and others)—that they were worthy of being reckoned and negotiated with, and eventually recognized as equal partners in the realm of statecraft. National borders invented and imposed by colonial powers would be respected, trade agreements would generally (or eventually) be concluded with the former colonial power, laws drawn up by the former colonial masters against internal dissidence would continue to be used, etc. The native bourgeoisie took over all the institutions of government, deflecting—through appeals to explicitly cross-class ethno-national unity and solidarity—the more basic struggle between exploiter and exploited.

7.

The gender- and ethnic-based liberation movements in Europe and the

United States of the late-1960s/early-1970s took their ideological cues and justifications from these successful anti-colonialist struggles. The rhetoric of Third World national liberation was used constantly, to the point where many African-Americans, some women and other self-identified oppressed groups began to describe themselves as

**Rather than promoting categories of denigration and subordination, the counter-essentialist discourse of Identity Politics attempts to invert the historical categories of oppression into categories of celebration. This is often initiated by appropriating insults and turning them into acceptable, even honorable, labels. What had once been intended to harm the Other thereby becomes a way to show pride in the Group Self.**

"internal colonies." Minorities of all kinds had already been identified as subordinate Others by the elites of hierarchical societies; the facile identification of the colonial exploiter and his institutions as the oppressive Other is at the heart of the trouble with Identity Politics. The assigning of blame, responsibility, and guilt to everyone identified as belonging to the category of oppressive Other curtails the possibility of transcending hierarchy and domination; this process merely inverts the values placed on particular classes or groups of people, regardless of their personal complicity in historical or contemporary oppression.

8.

For most women liberationists, the category of Woman—reduced to a hermetic category based only on gender—became the only category of importance. The denigration and oppression of women was clear everywhere: discrimination, rape and other forms of violence, harassment, the expectation and enforcement of motherhood and heterosexuality, and the myriad ways of keeping women dependent and subservient. Women liberationists declared

Patriarchy to be the Enemy, some taking the next logical step and making Men—reduced to a hermetic category based only on gender—the Enemy.

For most black nationalists, the category of Black—reduced to a hermetic category based on genetics and race—became the only category of importance. The denigration and oppression of blacks was clear everywhere: discrimination in the form of Jim Crow, lynching and other forms of violence, harassment (especially by law enforcement), the expectation and enforcement of servility, and the myriad ways of keeping black people dependent and subservient. Black nationalists declared White Racism to be the Enemy, some taking the next logical step and making White People—reduced to a hermetic category based on genetics and race—the Enemy.

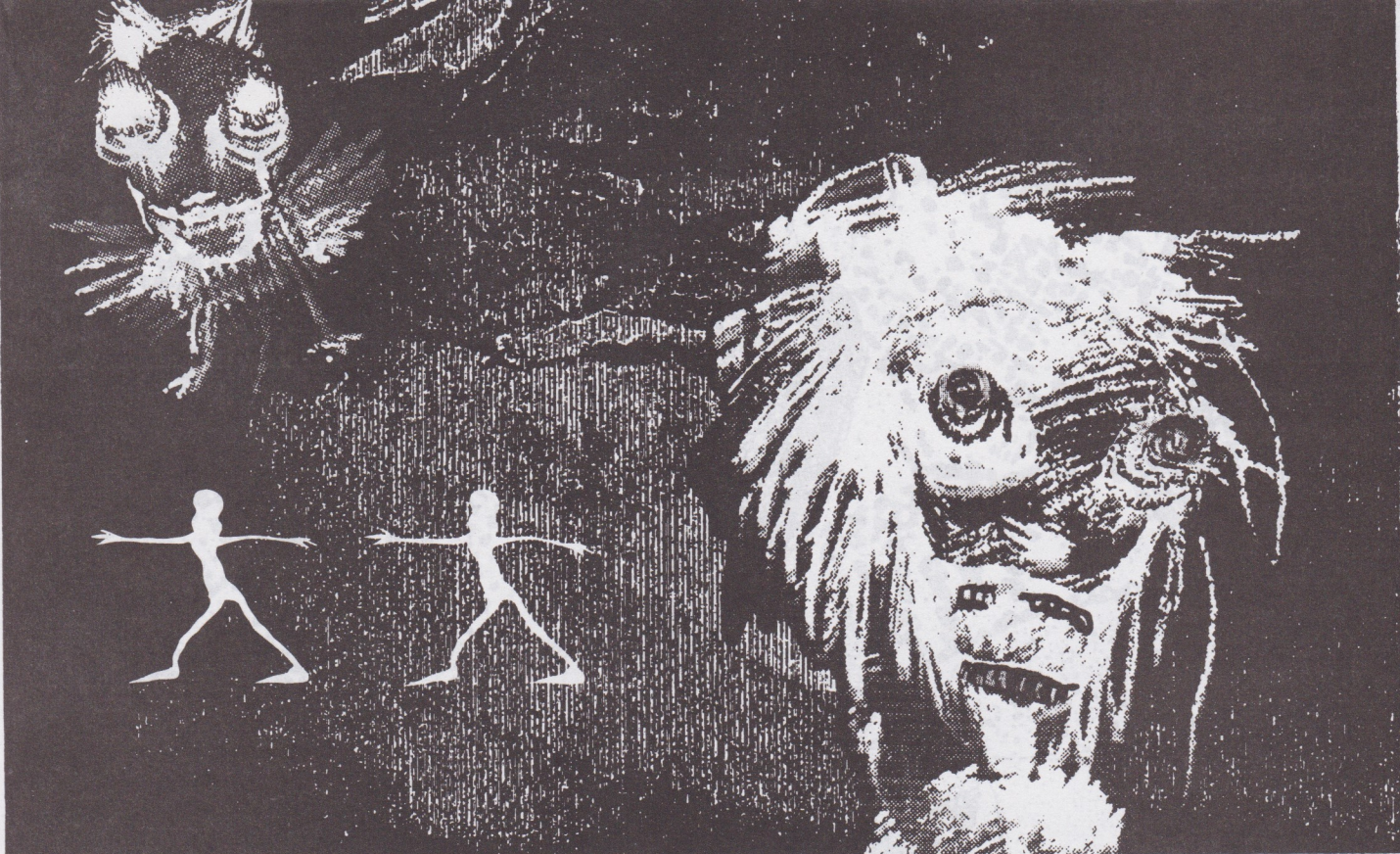
9.

Race and gender, similar to other culturally specific ideological constructs, are both real and unreal. Unreal in the biological sense; conceptions of these distinctions do not correspond to objective—that is, non-culturally based—categories. Real in the sociological sense; there are clear ways of discerning racism, sexism, and other forms of domination and exploitation regardless of any particular cultural context. They are therefore deserving of critical attention. Those who champion the discourse of gender studies have done an excellent job in analyzing and shattering the contingent nature of how gender is understood, showing that particular combinations of chromosomes and genitalia are only a part (and arguably not even the most important part) of what makes gender meaningful. Critical race theory is also an encouraging and interesting recent anti-essentialist development.

10.

Colonialists and their apologists consistently promote mythico-ideological categories of domination. People opposed to hierarchical institutions al-





Mark Neville

ready understand and expect that. The main conceptual contradiction of anti-imperialists (those who supposedly oppose colonial practices) is their own acceptance of Euro-American prejudices and stereotypes—only with the values inverted. The categories of denigrated Other (black, savage, woman) created and maintained for the exclusive benefit of Eurosupremacists and sexists are not called into question; their objectivity is self-evident, based on the common sense of the culture originally created by the racists and sexists. Everyone can tell whether someone is male or female—it's biological. Everyone can tell whether someone is black or white—it's scientific. Even before (but especially during) the formative years of European colonialism, Science and Biology were seen as methodologies for discerning Objective Reality. Anti-imperialists, as good Marxist-Leninists, find nothing troubling about Science; it's what separates their particular ideology from all other forms of socialism. However, Science is an ideologically driven pursuit. Thinking of Science as some neutral examination and discernment of facts for the sake of technological progress, increasing human liberation, and knowledge about

the universe should be treated as any other form of wishful thinking. Knowledge is not separate from the uses to which it has been and is currently being put.

# 11.

Group self-definition would seem to fit in with the anarchist principles of self-organization and voluntary association. Counter-essentialist identity can even be understood as an attempt to recapture kinship-based community, destroyed by the imposition of industrial capitalism (which is based on division of labor and the resulting atomization and alienation of individuals from each other). It remains problematic, however, because it is an identity forged within the ideology of victimization; it rests on the same arbitrary and constructed categories that were previously formulated to justify oppression. Creating a supposedly liberatory counter-narrative that remains based on visual markers can never possibly question the validity of an oppressive ideology. The other problem is the promotion of an ideologically constructed identity. Such an identity demands group loyalty and solidarity over and above the actual lived experiences of the individuals involved.

The person who is attracted to the promised sense of belonging offered by any institution (whether an oppressed group, a hierarchical organization, or any formation promoting Unity) must agree to the prior distinctions and categories created by others. Once the counter-essentialist agrees to the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion (which is step one on the road to separatism), s/he can't identify or be identified any other way; whatever criteria already exist in the counter-essentialist narrative are the only ones that matter. This Identity Fundamentalism requires that any person interested in radical transformation relinquish the ability to define her/himself. S/he must dissolve any self-awareness into pre-existing categories of significance. Biology—no matter its ideological and cultural constraints—is Destiny; subjectivity can only be sacrificed and/or suppressed. One of the first authoritarian lies is that someone else knows better.

Essentialists, merely by casting a cursory glance at their chosen Other, already know all they need to know about that person. Separatists, nationalists, anti-imperialists—essentialists all—call that Liberation.





MARK NEVILLE ©89



# Demoralizing Moralism

Jason McQuinn

## mo·ral·i·ty

N. (pl. -ies) principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior. (*The New Oxford American Dictionary*)

## mor·al·ism

N. the practice of moralizing, esp. showing a tendency to make judgments about others' morality (*The New Oxford American Dictionary*)

**M**ost anarchists—just like most other people on the planet—remain relatively naive concerning all the problems with theories and practices of compulsory morality and moralism. Positive references to various forms of compulsory morality are nearly ubiquitous in both historical and contemporary anarchist writings, despite the occasional influence of Max Stirner's critique of morality amongst the more widely read. Even amongst anarchist writers who have actually read Max Stirner's 1844 master work, *The Ego and Its Own*, his powerful and important critique of morality often remains either misunderstood, ignored or rejected. And although most anarchists may understand that moralism is a self-defeating practice in radical social movements, it is more often excessive references to morality that are so understood, rather than submission to compulsory morality per se.

Every social theory—including those based on philosophy, religion or science—contains judgements of value by necessity. There is no form of knowledge that can be strictly value-free or even value-neutral. Unlike the natural sciences which can more easily—though never completely—evade acknowledgement of the human values expressed within their hypotheses, theories and research programs, the social

sciences are unable to hide their multiple commitments to particular forms and particular expressions of human values. For example, Max Weber, one of the most important of the early scientific social theorists, admitted that "There is no absolutely 'objective' scientific analysis of culture or of 'social phenomena' independent of special and 'one-sided' viewpoints to which—expressedly or tacitly, consciously or unconsciously—they are selected, analysed and organised for expository purposes." (see Max Weber's *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* edited by Edward Schils & Henry Parsons [The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1949])

Values are even more obviously implicated in radical social theories which are explicitly formulated to aid the pursuit of deeply rooted structural changes in society. But such values can be constituted in two distinctly different manners: (1) as finite, historical expressions of people's individual and social desires, and (2) as being imputed to have some form of fetishized, transcendental—often absolute, ahistorical or objective—existence over and above human individuals and communities. Unfortunately, there is no commonplace, well-understood terminology to easily distinguish these two manners of constituting and speaking of human values. And this alone can lead to misunderstandings.

## Problems of terminology

Terminology is a problem with many aspects of social critique wherever overcoming the many facets of social alienation is concerned. For every form of fetishization, whether religion, ideology, politics, commodity-fetishism and work, or morality, there remains a corresponding form of non-fetishized thinking and activity that is most often uncritically lumped together with it. Thus the critique of religion often founders on the irrational insistence that nonfetishized thinking about life and the cosmos actually constitutes a form religion, and that, therefore, since this particular form of religion is not fetishized the critique of religion as such is unfounded. Similarly, those opposed to the critique of



**The pattern...is clear. Where people are committed to undermining, evading or denying radical social criticism, they most often insist on defining away such criticism by denying there is any consistent difference between the present alienated society and any potential liberated (non-alienated) way of life.**

ideology consistently claim to see no difference between fetishized social theory and nonfetishized social theory, calling every form of social theory "ideology" in order to evade the sting of criticism for their own devotion to particular ideological mystifications. Where politics is concerned, all human beings are often simply *defined* as "political animals" by the defenders of political mediation and the state. This poor excuse for reasoning then often goes that if human beings are inherently "political," then the state is a natural form of (political) community that can't be questioned. Commodity fetishism and work also have their illogical defenders, including many mistakenly posing as anti-capitalist radicals. The pattern here is clear. Where people are committed to undermining, evading or denying radical social criticism, they most often insist on defining away such criticism by denying there is any consistent difference between the present alienated society and any potential liberated (non-alienated) way of life.

The same strategy is usually employed whenever the critique of morality begins to be formulated. Although most dictionary definitions of morality clearly imply it involves the fetishization of values, this implication is lost on most readers. For example, *The New Oxford American Dictionary* defines morality as "principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior." Obviously, the "right and wrong or good and bad" qualifiers here are most likely to be taken as fetishized, transcendental values, rather than as particular, finite choices with no claims to any reality beyond the unique desires of individual human beings. However, the moment the critique of morality is raised, even in this magazine, there are always those who pop up with the aim to confuse things (in order to defend their own moralistic commitments) by claiming in one form or another that there is no such thing as a non-moral human value! Most people, following dictionary definitions, would never say that a person expressing her or his own desires with no claim to transcendental status for them is being moral by valuing a particular goal. But the defenders of morality will come out of the woodwork to claim that even the most finite, ephemeral and contingent human desire indicates the existence of a moral system every bit as real as those taught by the Catholic Church!

To avoid this intentional confusionism wrought by those afraid of any criticism directed at their own sacred cows, people pursuing critiques of morality usually attempt to make a clear distinction between ethics and morality. In this case, ethics is considered to be concerned with finite, non-fetishized values, while morality is concerned with fetishized, transcendental values: right and wrong or good and bad. Unfortunately, since there is almost no radical and substantial criticism of morality in our popular culture (as opposed to the mountains of superficial and insubstantial, partial criticisms of morality), appeals by moralists to dictionary definitions of "ethics" often derail such attempts. (Dictionary definitions in an alienated, moralistic society will never likely reflect the possibility that a dichotomy between fetishized and nonfetishized values could even exist. For most people consistently nonfetishized values simply aren't considered possible).

Therefore, in this essay, I will try to refer to the critique of "compulsory morality" in order to make it absolutely clear that I'm speaking of a system of fetishized values that demand compliance. And that I'm never speaking of some unlikely form of nonfetishized system (or nonsystematic set) of values that some moralist will still insist on calling "moral" in order to confuse things. I will also refer to an alternative of "finite ethics" to make it clear that the alternative to compulsory morality involves finite, nonfetishized values. And to make it clear that I'm not speaking of an ethics inclusive of both nonfetishized *and* fetishized values.

### **The anatomy of compulsory morality**

Compulsory morality involves self-subjugation to a system or set of values that are, for one reason or another, believed to require mandatory compliance—even if the person believing this is unable to—as the cliché goes—"live up to them." Although compulsory morality can potentially be grounded within an individual's subjective experience, it is almost always instead grounded somewhere outside the realm of directly lived human experience.

For example, religious forms of morality are grounded in such unlikely (nonexistent) places as "the Word of God," or other forms of supposed direct revelation from some sort of unseen, disembodied, (unreal) Spirit. (Of course, this grounding is generally mediated through the supposed gods' appointed representatives on Earth.) In this form of compulsory morality, God (or Satan, or the Gods, or the Goddess, or the Great Spirit, etc.) are supposed to be the source of moral values that must be followed because the source—whatever it may be—is in some sense considered far more real and important than the unique individual person who cannot be trusted to know what she or he should do without the guidance of a system of fetishized, sacred values. The formal structure of compulsory religious morality is thus: sacred values from an unseen source to be followed by a relatively worthless human being whatever the context. With a system of values like this, whatever the actual content of the morality, is it any wonder that people attempting to live this form of alienation are constantly mystified about their lives, desires and social relationships?

However, in these modern times, the place of religion has often been supplanted by other things, like Science, or



particular social or political ideologies (like Marxism) that demand compulsory adherence. Although religious morality can be a dominant social force in areas of the world not highly colonized by capital (like most of Afghanistan; for example) in areas in which industrial capitalism, mass media commodity consumption already dominate social relationships in fact (as in most of the world's urban areas), religious morality will be severely compromised. Other forms of enlightened compulsory morality based upon Science, social or political ideologies, or even rationalist philosophies will contend for the allegiance of the victims of morality. Especially when the values of particular religions get in the way of the exercise of political power, the subjugation of resources, or the exploitation of labor, they will over time find themselves supplanted with more amenable modern forms of thought and morality.

Science is one example of a source of many forms of modern, enlightened compulsory morality. I have capitalized it above to indicate that it is not the actual practice of experimental exploration of nature in pursuit of knowledge (science) of which I'm speaking, but an ideological construct (Science) of particular fetishized scientific ideas taken out of their finite, experimental contexts and elevated into general, quasi-religious principles. The prestige of the various forms of scientism (ideologies and worship of Science) is based on the practical accomplishments of experimental science in combination with industrial capitalism. Together their power seems to rival that of the old gods for many modern citizens of the civilized world. For those whom religion no longer satisfies, but who do not yet understand the social origins of ideas and values, the various forms of scientism can be very appealing. They all involve the deduction of value systems from particular, reified scientific (or semi-scientific, or even pseudo-scientific) theories. Notable examples include the (misnamed) social Darwinist ideas whose morality is usually based on some version of the Spencerian "survival of the fittest" ("and Devil take the hindmost"), the ideologists of the fetishized gene whose morality is based on imagining what genes (as if they had minds of their own!) would want their bodies to do, and all the various ethnological, zoological, or evolutionary psychological reifications of humanity whose moralities are all based on imagining that our values are determined by biology or genetics, etc. The formal structure of the various scientific moralities is, once again, the same as that for religious morality: sacred values from an unseen source to be followed by a relatively worthless human being whatever the context. Like religious morality, scientific versions of morality attempt to limit and determine what is supposed to be humanly desirable and possible, narrowing the choices that can be made by true believers.

Within the anarchist milieu scientism is less of a problem (though it certainly influences a lot of people), than are (usually half-digested) social and political ideologies like Marxism. Left anarchists are often especially influenced by the approaches taken towards morality by the various strands of Marxist ideology.

### **The Marxist Evasion**

Amongst Marxist theorists and writers morality often gets much less overt respect than in the anarchist milieu, but

**The formal structure of the various scientific moralities is, once again, the same as that for religious morality: sacred values from an unseen source to be followed by a relatively worthless human being whatever the context. Like religious morality, scientific versions of morality attempt to limit and determine what is...humanly...possible....**

forms of scientism and objectivistic dialectics tend to take its problematic place. Many anarchists have little problem perceiving and understanding the ideological nature of the identification of the Marxist project as "scientific." This rhetorical trope was originally based on harnessing the 19th century credibility and mystique of the natural sciences to help drive one particular form of attempted radical social critique ahead of others in popular consideration. Anarchists also generally understand that the objectivistic (naturalized) dialectics of all the most prevalent forms of Marxism function as little more than arcane formulae for justifying whatever Karl Marx and his epigones wanted justified. The abstract and highly speculative nature of Marxist dialectics is usually obscured in an attempt to lend an appearance of logic and solidity to ideological arguments and positions that defy conventional attempts at more transparent rationalization.

Interestingly, the Marxist turn towards "scientific" legitimation and objectivistic dialectics was directly influenced by Max Stirner's critique of morality. Before *The Ego and Its Own* appeared at the end of 1844, Karl Marx was a humanist political philosopher in the style of Ludwig Feuerbach (see Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, for example). After the sensational debut of Stirner's phenomenological philosophy of the ego ("ego" was another word for "self" at the time—well before Freud transformed its popular meaning) with its trenchant criticism of morality, Marx was forced to come to terms with the naiveté of his moralistic humanism and transformed his entire social philosophy, beginning with *The Germany Ideology*, written in 1845. However, Marx was ultimately unable and unwilling to leave his philosophy unjustified by the objective world, frequently describing his ideology as "scientific" and increasingly mistaking his dialectical speculations for objective truths. Ultimately, most ideologies of modern Marxism have developed explicit forms of compulsory morality which have been deduced from what have become the transcendental truths of Marxism. Marxist movements that have achieved state power have given especially concrete and bloody meanings to the worker's gulag morality of Marxism, though this hasn't stopped some left anarchists from appropriating aspects of the various forms of Marxist morality as their own.

**Continued on page 67**







# The Meaning of Tiananmen

Burt Green

"It's anarchy, but it's organized anarchy."

-Dan Rather, reporting from Tiananmen Square, late May/early June 1989

**N**o one can be deceived that the government of the People's Republic of China does not take the anniversaries of its massacres seriously. Already, more than six weeks before the fifteenth anniversary of the People's Liberation Army's bloody clearing of Tiananmen Square—and the wholesale slaughter of those resisting in Beijing's working-class suburbs—three mothers of victims killed at that time had been pre-emptorily arrested, and then released. Shortly afterward, Dr. Jiang Yan Yong, internationally renowned for having exposed the government's grotesque mismanagement and cover up of the SARS crisis, was detained for publicly recalling the regrets of Yang Shangkun (one of the pillars of the post-Tiananmen central government in 1989) regarding the "6-4 Incident," along with his own plea for a reassessment of what had happened. He has reemerged into the light only after two months of "reeducation" and pressure to recant his position. Liu Xiaobo, China's preeminent social critic, was also taken into custody and has yet to be released. The authorities are certainly nervous, but they're not the only ones who should be.

Around the world, the events in Beijing on June 3-4, 1989, have been commemorated with solemn speeches and ceremonies, each crafted to reflect the glory of Beijing's courageous citizenry onto the current projects of the official world in a light filtered by its present interests. Those governments that owe their present existence to the consequences of the June events in Eastern Europe have the opportunity to once again express their gratitude that the wind blew west that year. Refugee members of the Chinese expatriate elite who were at the Square and who have since used the backs of dead

heroes as the stepping stones to their own contemptible business successes may, like Chai Ling, speak dismissively of the former movement. Others, less adaptable, like Liu Binyan, of missed career opportunities and portfolios denied them by the reaction. Fundamentalist Maoists and other Marxist-Leninist types seek to identify themselves with the 1989 Protest Movement, despite the fact that the movement constituted itself as an organic opposition against precisely the kind of society Marxism-Leninism has always created. The official leaders of the West attempt to distract the world from their increasing economic dependence on, and support of, China's elite by putting the slogans of their market dictatorship and its decrepit parliamentary facade into the mouths of Chinese corpses, making them appear to have died for Niketown instead of Autonomous Beijing. Human Rights activists, trade-unionists and spokespersons for the Chinese democracy movement deplore the massacre of non-violent protestors and the continued repression of political, labor and religious oppositionists, without calling for the liquidation of the bureaucratic class in whose interest this ongoing reaction is structurally embedded. When the citizens of Beijing are mentioned, it is largely as victims, not as actors. Those whose voices should be loudest of all are still stifled. What, it should instead be asked, were the achievements of the "Hundred Million Heroes" who took to the streets and in so doing, took possession of their city, of those who joined them from all over the country, and of those who emulated them elsewhere in metropolitan China?

The first of these must be the triumph of having developed an enduring culture of resistance to the totalitarian state-capitalist dictatorship of the Communist Party of China. That the citizens of Beijing were able to coordinate their actions swiftly enough to take advantage of the opportunity provided for a manifestation of public opinion by the death of the liberal former Party Secretary Hu Yaobang is only one example of the formidable organizational capacity with which this culture was endowed. This had its beginnings in 1968 when groups of workers, ex-soldiers, students and peasants



who had been mobilized against reformist Party bureaucrats (among them Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping) by the circle of extremist ideologues around Mao Zedong during the phony "Cultural Revolution," began to turn it instead into an authentic grassroots movement for a self-organized "People's Commune of China" against the state. They also established linkages and routes for information, underground libraries, and escape routes for fugitives. Continuity in the development of this current to the present may be seen in the contemporaneous Beijing group "North Star," which included Chen Zeming, one of the "black hands" (i.e. hidden organizers) later alleged to be behind the Beijing events of 1989. On a city-wide scale, the self-organizational capabilities of the Beijing populace were first to become famously evident in the open defiance of the more than 200,000 people who demonstrated against the Maoist regime of austerity, overwork and faith-based terror in Tiananmen Square on April 5th, 1976.

Secondly, the material existence of Autonomous Beijing as both a real occupation of physical and social space and the assertion of a living alternative to the dominant organization of society overseen by the Communist Party, was already the refutation of the Party's thirty years of rule. The self-organization of the Beijing citizens, the establishment of committees that organized incoming supplies and saw to the housing of thousands of students and others from out of town, removed garbage, wrote, printed and distributed publications, not only exploded the fashionable western myth that improvements in the Chinese standard of living had suddenly depoliticized the population, but also proved, to the permanent discomfiture of our masters everywhere, that the population of one of the largest cities on the planet can organize its affairs without the interference of government, the state, and any of its institutions.

Thirdly, the profundity of the transformation that affected the people of Beijing moved the world. The public declaration by the thieves of Beijing that they would not rob citizens during the crisis cannot help but remind one of the similar declaration made by the thieves of the Paris Commune in 1871. The free delivery of food and other goods by the small entrepreneurs, the *getihu*, to the occupants of the square, the desertion, refusal to fire on demonstrators, and the spontaneous distribution of weapons to the crowds by elements of the PLA, as well as incidents in which public security officials warned demonstrators of the arrival of the police and army, were occasions on which people asserted their freedom precisely to the extent that they broke the laws of the economy and hierarchical power and refused the social roles to which they had been assigned. The stubborn solidarity that was extended to the movement's activists by their fellow workers when they refused to identify "troublemakers," and by neighborhoods to snipers firing on the military occupiers, also shows that these sentiments did not wash off in warm water.

**What, it should instead be asked, were the achievements of the "Hundred Million Heroes" who took to the streets and in so doing, took possession of their city, of those who joined them from all over the country, and of those who emulated them elsewhere in metropolitan China?**

Fourthly, the events of May-June 1989 in Beijing appear as the reassertion of Chinese historical consciousness over the static lie presented by totalitarian bureaucratic capitalism. The long overdue passing of historical judgment on the more than three decades of ferocious pre-capitalist accumulation, mass-murder and starvation, the attempted erasure of Chinese history, culture and intellect, and its replacement by the simplistic idiocy of Maoism, took place on May 23rd, with the paint-filled egg attack on the massive picture of Mao

Zedong, greatest oppressor in human history, by three young men from his home province of Hunan, Yu Zhijian, Yu Dongyue and Lu Decheng. The degree to which this act of signal bravery was understood and supported also marked the limit of the movement's consciousness of the meaning of its own existence in acts.

These accomplishments do not however, obscure the importance of noting the mistakes made by this unprecedented social movement as it attempted to find its way through the unknown.

Many of the shortcomings of the movement lay in its origins in a student milieu still burdened with the habits of the old Chinese scholar-gentry and its neo-Confucian role as moral repository and advisor to the imperial court. To preserve the purity of "their" movement, students sought initially, as they had during the 1986-1987 movement, to limit contacts with and participation by the workers and other outsiders. In fact their movement only really began to resonate throughout Chinese society and raise the actual question of power when the massed citizenry of Beijing, pointedly among them the workers of Capital Steel, joined them first in support of their hunger strike and then in defiance of martial law. Even so, when the organizers of the Workers' Autonomous Federation wanted to set up a tent in Tiananmen Square, they were confined to the outer perimeter. The authorities who suppressed the occupation of the square were not so blinkered as to their importance; the WAF tent was one of the first at which they directed their assault. The students' misdirected desire to appear as a loyal opposition to the regime (and their equally absurd thinking that this attitude would protect them) appears repeatedly as the greatest limitation of a movement which had already broken the bonds of loyalty in the eyes of China's masters, and was going to be made to pay for it. The student's nearly complete misunderstanding of the nature of legitimacy under bureaucratic power and the illusion that the Party could be negotiated with, left them defenseless both in terms of the theoretical means of describing their undertaking and in regards to the narrow practice of civil disobedience it led them to adopt. There were fewer who shared this view in the working-class suburbs, where large numbers were arrested for possession of weapons and ammunition: proof that there, the requisite conditions for the negation of bureaucratic capitalism were better understood.

In the three weeks during which the movement grew and





Meal truck delivering food to protestors in the square.

developed, it was not always possible for institutions of self-rule to realize directly democratic forms, the more so as China was not a society in which the ideas of directly democratic, anti-statist, anti-capitalist social organization could be freely or legally disseminated. Partly as a consequence, there was a lack of clarity regarding the nature of organizational forms and a fear by what was already becoming the elite of the student movement, of the consequences to their power arising from the adoption of democratic procedures. When Liu Xiaobo, "the liumang (hooligan) intellectual," proposed elections to the student leaders, the response of one of them, Wuer Kaixi, was "what if we don't win?" On the other hand, however prominent the movement's informal leadership became, it always remained subject to the sovereign base. Again, in Wuer Kaixi's words: "Anyone in charge had to support the Tiananmen occupation. Were you to ask the students to leave, they would get rid of you." The disproportional importance of personalities, a corresponding underdevelopment of ideas of self-organization and the lack of a general critique of bureaucratic capitalism (as of world capitalism in general) were signs of the movement's relative immaturity. How really insignificant these "leading personalities" turned out to be, once detached from the movement of which they had been a part, became only too clear later in exile. Today, the continuing preoccupation with personalities by the Chinese opposition in exile is the sign of a milieu still without a substantive oppositional

politics. The feeble philosophical and psychological resistance to religion afforded by many of these same refugees serves as well as another unedifying display of their soft critical cores. The greatness of the 1989 Protest Movement was not in its leaders, but in its rank-and-file, ordinary citizens, workers and students.

...After June 4, under the guidance of the district and municipal governments, neighborhood committees organized 649 work teams with 156,000 members to participate in the task of restoring order to traffic and society. Neighborhood committee cadres and activists joined forces with Martial Law Enforcement Troops and the People's Police to clear away roadblocks, remove posters and slogans, and clean up the city. Altogether they cleared away roadblocks in more than 570 places, washed or painted over more than 30,000 slogans, and picked up more than 80 tons of bricks and stones, making a great contribution toward the early restoration of normal traffic and a stable situation in the capital.

-*Peking Evening News*, August 3, 1989

The period immediately following June 4th consisted of two moments: first the repression itself, and then a frenzied renewal of economic activity with the object of purchasing, through increases in the Chinese standard of living, the loyalty of the urban population. Progress in the application of this strategy, which has continued to the present, has been





Beijing citizens swarm around military vehicles, June 1989.

uneven. The large number of unproductive state-owned enterprises has presented a serious obstacle to structural "reform," particularly in the "rust belt" of the Northeast. Sell-offs of factories to entrepreneurs or cronies of local officials have been accompanied by large-scale lay-offs of employees without pension, compensation, medical insurance or much prospect of employment. Protests have been met with repression even as they have become more widespread and well organized. Privatization, corruption and dispossession and poverty are, just as in the West, inextricably linked. The rapid growth of demand for office space and luxury—or less than luxury—homes has resulted as well in the same destruction of older communities we have seen in the West, only with fewer constraints on developers and fewer protections for neighborhoods.

In the countryside, the initial takeoff of the rural economy, fueled by the breakup of the state-imposed "People's Communes" and permission given peasants to rent and farm their own plots, has begun to slow as an ever-growing army of parasitic officials have discovered ways to tap into the peasants' income stream. By the mid-nineties, peasant protests were becoming increasingly common, sometimes closing roads or attacking local Party headquarters. The geologically dubious Three Gorges Dam, the centerpiece monument of Chinese hydroelectric civilization to the outgoing generation of post-Maoist bureaucrats (of whom Li

Peng is the most obvious example) and possibly the world's largest outdoor cesspool when fully backed-up, has also exacerbated the situation of the more than one million peasants in its way. It continues to be a sensitive issue. There is presently a moratorium on reporting the alluvial buildup of sediment behind the dam, the more that 100 cracks that have appeared in it, the pollution and environmental damage that has resulted from its construction, and the situation of those displaced. Many other rural Chinese are leaving the farm and heading for the cities to join the immense "floating population," presently of 114 million, there looking for work in an economy increasingly shifting to skilled labor and already oversupplied with unskilled workers. The health care system in the countryside has collapsed as hospitals have become profit-making enterprises and those who cannot pay are abandoned. The plight of those remaining in the countryside is deteriorating. Women in rural China now have the highest rate of suicide in the world.

The Chinese government's recent suppression of the already widely sold exposé of peasant life by Chen Guidi and Wu Chuntao, titled "An Investigation of China's Peasantry," is but one recent demonstration of its anxiety about the state of affairs in the countryside. Although praising current efforts to ease farmer's tax burdens, the main thrust of the piece was to show how corrupt local officials undermine the well-intentioned policies of the central government. Three years



earlier, the government itself had issued a 308-page report which described farmers increasingly squeezed by local officials who levy excess fees, by a slowing rural economy and by declining crop yields from increasingly degraded land. It noted as well an increasingly confrontational tide of protest in which protesters "frequently seal-off bridges and blockade roads, storm party and government offices, coercing party committees and government, and there are even criminal acts such as attacking, trashing, looting and arson." Concern over the continuing volatility of the countryside and the potential of protests to spread during this June may be also measured in the swiftness with which the recent protests by Shenzhen farmers against the demolition of their homes and eviction from their land were quelled.

**Present conditions in China are a consequence of the passage from the murderous, accelerated accumulation of capital during the late fifties and early sixties, through the intrabureaucratic warfare of the sixties and seventies, to the state-supervised laissez-faire of the present.**

The nature of the Communist Party has itself been affected by the changes it has wrought in society and the economy as it has moved away from the former centralized, "planned" Marxist-Leninist models of economic management and given increasing institutional prominence to the business class whose rising power the Party wishes for its own. The price of this open accommodation of private capitalists has been the endangerment of the Party's legitimacy as the "party of the proletariat" at a time when the Party's room to maneuver in containing working-class and peasant protests is shrinking. The occasional populist gestures of the present generation of Chinese leaders reveal what they have learned from the social-imaginary manipulations of their American competitors; whether this proves sufficient to compensate for the Party's declining identification with "labor" is not certain.

Present conditions in China are a consequence of the passage from the murderous, accelerated accumulation of capital during the late fifties and early sixties, through the intrabureaucratic warfare of the sixties and seventies, to the state-supervised laissez-faire of the present. Restrictions on private economic activity outside of state control were breached by massive popular pressure and the remarkable productive capacity of the Chinese people was enlisted under the slogan "to get rich is glorious." This trajectory has seen one of the world's most rapid rises in living standards—an event which occurred not because of what the party had done, but because of what it no longer stood in the way of. To a considerable extent the export-driven economic growth of the last decade and a half has accomplished the political objectives the Party had set for it: the creation of modern corporate engines of growth which have powerfully extended Chinese markets overseas (made possible in great part by the continued suppression of workers' struggles for increased wages and safety measures—an article by Columbia law professor John Fabian Witt cited in the May 8, 2004 *Asian Labour News* reported the official figure that 14,675 Chinese workers had died on the job last year, but went on to note that "some observers suggest the number may be closer to 120,000."); the growth of a class of more than one million

million-yuan entrepreneurs; the development of a middle-class consumer sector replete with all the cars and culture, fashion and fleeting fame found in the West; the ability through its export-generated surplus to obtain goods and technology hitherto unavailable for the expansion of both the economic and military spheres; and the quiescence of much of the intelligentsia which, having thrown itself "into the sea" of commerce, is now acquiring a stake in the current arrangements of power. This will tend to further fragment the

intelligentsia at the same time that the education of a new generation in business values, as was pointed out this spring by Fang Lizhi, will undermine its solidarity and commitment to social change.

The strategy of privatizing the old state enterprises will do more than just empower a new stratum of entrepreneurs dependant on the Party for its position and

continued well-being. Hit on the one hand by the movement of privatization and the other by the surge in the floating population as more and more peasants are driven off the land, the old industrial working class will be increasingly marginalized precisely as its material position worsens and its militancy becomes more marked. As reported by the Hong Kong Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy, the number of large-scale protests in China had nearly tripled to 170,000 in the year 2000 from 1998. Many of these demonstrations were in cities where unemployed workers from state-owned enterprises and migrant workers made for a potentially explosive combination. It follows that organizing links between the floating population and the urban working class will be crucial for success in future struggles.

During the course of this process, structural problems, such as lack of transportation infrastructure or sufficient available energy resources, have created temporary bottlenecks that are rapidly being overcome. Barriers to Chinese economic expansion overseas have been reduced, notably by China's entry into international trade bodies such as the WTO. More serious and intractable difficulties reside in the continuing disparities of wealth between cities and the countryside, between coastal and riparian areas of economic growth and inland areas of stagnation and in the growing environmental crisis created by decades of unchecked, badly planned industrial development. One estimate predicts a 25 percent loss in arable land, a 40 percent increase in water needs, a 230 to 290 percent increase in wastewater, a 40 percent increase in particulate emissions, and a 150 percent increase in sulfur dioxide emissions by 2020. The declining quality of water and air, along with the exhaustion of aquifers and soil, will increase pressures on the Chinese state to both save and protect what is left, and to obtain these resources elsewhere.

In 1996, the residents of Tangshan City took to the streets to protest the pollution emanating from Tongda Rubber, a tire-recycling plant. The air pollution from the factory was causing headaches, dizziness, nausea, rashes,





Members of the floating population waiting at a railway station.

and insomnia. In the face of their complaints, local officials threatened protesters with loss of their jobs and pensions. In a showdown, 700 residents blockaded the factory, while factory workers rallied against the plant closure. The local Tangshan government eventually ordered the plant shut down.

-from *The River Runs Black* by E. Economy (2004), p.85

With new conditions of development, new forms of resistance to exploitation and the Party's control of society have also arisen. Individual freedoms have widened where, as temporary expedients, they serve an expanding consumer economy whose growth is inextricably linked to the survival of the Communist Party of China. The creation of a middle class to world standards has caused this class to demand what it imagines to be a world-class standard (of middle-class living), too. As the non-resident "floating population" becomes more and more skilled, it has begun to demand guarantees previously withheld from it as well. The death of graphic artist Jun Zhigang at a detention center for non-residents led to a popular outcry that may result in lasting reform to the system of detentions. The arrest of those few souls brave enough, like Liu Di, the "Stainless Steel Mouse," to publish statements of solidarity with critics of the regime on the Internet has led to campaigns to free them and enlarge the zone of free expression in the electronic media. Despite the Great Firewall created by the Party's Public Security Bureau and manned by 30,000 operatives, the censorship of information coming into China is proving a

difficult task. In an effort to contain the incoming tide, the government has now begun to move against text messaging. These forms of sometimes tolerated resistance, so long as they remain isolated, offer by themselves no serious danger to the enormous repressive apparatus which remains the chief protection of Chinese bureaucratic capitalism. The figure given this March (and later retracted) by Chinese lawmaker Chen Zhonglin indicates that nearly 10,000 people are officially murdered by the state every year, a considerable surprise to Amnesty International which had estimated the number at no more than 2,000. Despite the seasonal anti-Taiwanese independence rhetoric, much, if not most, of the Chinese effort to modernize its armed forces has consisted of establishing rapid-reaction units that can be airlifted within China to suppress demonstrations, strikes and occupations.

In sum, none of the developments of the last decade and a half indicate any qualitative change in the nature of bureaucratic rule. Nor has there been any real resolution of the problems that gave rise to the Protest Movement of 1989. The Communist Party's solution—rapid marketization/privatization, generation of a middle class consumer economy, plus a strong infusion of nationalism, has delayed the moment of crisis while increasing the scale of displacement and alienation in many quarters, and the scale of expectations in others. Corruption continues on a colossal scale. PRC Auditor General Li Jinhua recently declared that 41 out of 55 government departments had instances of "malpractice." Cited as an example was the fate of poverty relief funds in



Chongqing, of which only 0.3% found their way into the hands of those intended to receive them. Strikes and protests in general have increased and there has been the (re)emergence, both in many parts of China, and as far overseas as Algeria, of a robust Chinese workers' culture of protest. Either the coming death of Zhao Ziyang or the developing crisis of sovereignty in Hong Kong may provide the catalyst for a restatement of the unresolved grievances festering throughout China, forming a clear opening for yet another

"return of the repressed" in which everything may once again be questioned. The specter of Autonomous Beijing continues to haunt the rulers of Zhongnanhai.

**Any new manifestation of autonomous organization must realize that its simple existence already constitutes an act of war and will mean a resumption of hostilities. To succeed, it must not only have resolved fundamental questions of organizational form and coordination between sectors, and ensure that power always resides in the general assemblies.... It must also thoroughly discard any illusions about the democratic nature of the marketplace....**

But any new manifestation of autonomous organization must realize that its simple existence already constitutes an act of war and will mean a resumption of hostilities. To succeed, it must not only have resolved fundamental questions of organizational form and coordination between sectors, and ensure that power always resides in the general assemblies that directly and democratically determine its policies and measures. It must also thoroughly discard any illusions about the democratic nature of the marketplace, the protection of liberties afforded by the rule of law unsecured and unlegitimated by the sovereign base, or about the desirability of making allies of reformist bureaucrats. The federation of free cities and countryside where this new power has established itself must be understood as the supersession of all states past, present, and future. This time too, the movement cannot have any illusions about the fate awaiting it if it is unable to sustain its momentum; there will be no alternative to armed conflict except total defeat. Desertions and refusals to follow orders have been shown to be by themselves sadly insufficient. If, in the words of Lu Xun, written in blood on the side of a burnt-out Beijing bus, "Blood debts must be repaid in blood," then it is best that new ones not be lightly incurred, and that initiative, once seized, never be yielded.

It is the hidden dragon of this other kind of sovereignty that makes this world quake and dissemble about what happened in Beijing during those three weeks in May/June 1989 when students and intellectuals were first emboldened to take to the streets in defiance of the authorities and drove their singing, chanting, marching spearhead into the vampire heart of the legitimacy of China's post-Maoist regime. And it is something that could happen anywhere, anytime that people decide to organize themselves directly for their own interests and take control of their lives. No government looks forward to events like these for the simple reason that acts of this sort are the living repudiation of the false principles of representation and authority that lie at the foundation of every government and every state that makes up this rotting civilization. Were the populations of Washington D.C. or London to take over their urban social space, administer it

directly and democratically themselves and begin to transform it in their interests, they would find themselves no better protected by "democracy" against the violence of "their" governments than the citizens of Beijing were protected by "communism" against theirs.

In the process of expanding social reproduction and submitting to the dictates of the marketplace directly instead of through the mediation of state planning, China has become the factory of the world. Conditions in this factory are appalling, as much from the activities of foreign capitalists as from indigenous ones. These foreign investors, in addition to enriching themselves through their Chinese operations, are able to derive a competitive pricing advantage through the state-assisted depression of Chinese workers' wages at the same time they drive down the cost of labor generally and globally, including of course, (both as a result of reductions of wages, benefits, etc., but also through attacks on government-sponsored social programs and

services—neoliberalism abroad and neoconservatism at home, as it were) the cost of labor in the developed countries where they are headquartered. Even elements of Chinese-style superexploitative social control have appeared, as when Walmart, one of the great beneficiaries of the disempowerment of (subcontracted) Chinese workers, was reported to have instituted a policy of locking its US night-shift workers into its plants. Later it has been reported that a number of other US companies now do likewise. Developments in the march of exploitation abroad are rarely without reciprocal effects at home, as are developments against it.

Ordinary people in China and in the United States have the same interests and the same enemies. Just as plutocrats east and west can collaborate in the dispossession, exploitation and impoverishment of each others' workers, so can these workers and all those who are fighting against the dictatorship of the marketplace, the security state, nationalism, religion and ideology in general, collaborate against the global elite. In the publicizing of exemplary actions, such as the demonstrations and rail blockages by textile workers at the Tieshu textile factory in Suizhou, Hubei Province, or the plight of those who stand in desperate need of support, like the imprisoned organizers of the labor actions at the Liaoyang Ferro-Alloy plant in Liaoning province during March of last year, there is an opportunity for an expression of the admiration and solidarity needed to build an international movement against capital and domination. There is also possible the realization that when American workers fight their enemies, they do not fight alone.

The need for a critique of the failure of the unions during such events as the recent west coast Safeway strike, and for an analysis of such actions as the successful wildcat highway

Continued on page 63







# Autonomous Self-Organization and Anarchist Intervention

Wolfi Landstreicher

## **Introduction: A few definitions and explanations**

**A**ny potentially liberatory struggle among the exploited and dispossessed must be based on autonomous self-organization. As anarchists, who are also usually among the exploited, we have every reason to participate in and encourage these struggles. But since we have specific ideas of how we want to go about our struggles and a specifically revolutionary aim, our participation takes the form of an intervention seeking to move the struggles in a specific direction. Having no desire to be any sort of vanguard or leadership or to be caught up in the joyless game of politicking, we find ourselves in a tension of trying to live our conception of struggle and freedom within the context of an unfree reality, of trying to confront the real daily problems we face with our own refusal to play by the rules of this world. Thus, the question of autonomous self-organization and anarchist intervention is an ongoing problem with which to grapple, refusing to fall into easy answers and faith in organizational panaceas. To begin exploring this question let's start with a few definitions and explanations.

## **Autonomous self-organization**

When I speak of autonomous self-organization, I am speaking of a specific phenomenon that tends to arise whenever people, angered by their conditions and having lost

faith in those delegated to act for them, decide to act for themselves. Autonomous self-organization therefore never manifests itself in the form of a political party, a union or any other sort of representative organization. All of these forms of organization claim to *represent* the people in struggle, to act in their name. And what defines autonomous self-organization is precisely the rejection of all representation. Parties, unions and other representative organizations tend to interact with autonomous organization only in the form of recuperators of the struggle, striving to take over leadership and impose themselves as spokespeople of the struggle—usually with the aim of negotiating with the rulers. Thus, they can only be viewed as potential usurpers wherever real self-organized revolt is occurring.

Autonomous self-organization has certain essential traits that define it. First of all it is non-hierarchical. There is no institutional or permanent leadership or authority. While someone who proves particularly knowledgeable with regards to specific matters relating to the struggle at hand will be given the attention she deserves for such knowledge, this cannot be allowed to become the basis for any permanent leadership role, because that would undermine another essential trait of autonomous self-organization: horizontal communication and relationships. This is a matter of people talking with each other, interacting with each other, expressing needs and desires openly, actually discussing the problems they face together and in practical terms, without any leadership to conform this expression to a set line. This brings us to another trait, one that may be controversial to



**Autonomous self-organization has certain essential traits that define it. First of all it is non-hierarchical. There is no institutional or permanent leadership or authority.... Another essential trait of autonomous self-organization [is] horizontal communication and relationships. ...[A third trait], one that may be controversial to collectivist ideologues, but that is the only way of guaranteeing the first two traits: the basic unit of autonomous self-organization is the *individual*.**

collectivist ideologues, but that is the only way of guaranteeing the first two traits: the basic unit of autonomous self-organization is the *individual*. Otherwise, it could be argued that all states and businesses are autonomous self-organization, because on the institutional and collective level they do organize themselves, but the individuals who comprise their human component are defined by these institutions and placed in accordance with the institutional needs. So autonomous self-organization is first of all the individual organizing his struggle against the conditions this world forces upon her on her own terms, finding the means necessary for carrying out that struggle. But among the means necessary are relations with other people, so autonomous self-organization is also a collective practice. But that collective practice is not based upon conforming individuals to an organization imposed on them, but rather on the development of relationships of mutuality between them in which they discover the areas of commonality in their struggles and need, affinity in their dreams and desires. One could say that autonomous self-organization is the development of a shared struggle based on mutuality for the full realization of each individual involved. To further clarify this point (and to quickly counter a false dichotomy often made in revolutionary milieus), one can look at it in terms of revolutionary class struggle. While the details vary, anti-state, anti-capitalist revolutionaries generally agree that the "revolutionary task" of the exploited class is to abolish itself as a class as it abolishes class society. What does this mean and when does it happen in the course of struggle? It seems to me, that this means precisely the rediscovery of oneself as an individual with one's own desires, needs and dreams which have no relation to what capital has to offer, desires, needs and dreams best fulfilled in free association with others based on mutuality and affinity.

When, in the course of struggle, the exploited begin to find the methods of organizing their own activity together, this process of abolishing themselves as a class has already begun since they are beginning precisely to talk and act with each other as *individuals*. Finally, autonomous self-organization is *practical*. It is not the setting up of any formal organization to represent anything. It is rather the bringing together of the elements necessary for accomplishing the various tasks and activities necessary to the particular struggle. This will tend to include the development of ways to communicate, ways to coordinate actions, ways to gather necessary tools and so on. As will be seen below, in large-scale struggles, assemblies tend to develop for discussing what is necessary; these are not formalized structures, but rather specific methods for dealing with the problems at hand.

#### **Anarchist intervention**

We anarchists are ourselves often among the exploited and dispossessed. Thus, we have an immediate need to struggle against this social order. At the same time, we come to these daily struggles with a conscious revolutionary perspective and with specific ideas about how to go about these struggles. Thus, it is inevitable that our participation as anarchists will take the form of intervention. So it is worthwhile to consider what makes our participation an intervention.

First of all, as anarchists, we come to every struggle with a conscious revolutionary perspective. Whatever the specific cause that provokes a struggle, we recognize it as an aspect of the social order that must be destroyed in order to open the possibilities for a free and self-determined existence. Struggles and revolts are generally provoked by specific circumstances, not by mass recognition of the need to destroy the state, capital and all the institutions through which domination and exploitation are carried out. Anarchist intervention, therefore, attempts to expand the struggle beyond the circumscribed cause that provokes it, to point out, not just in words, but through action the connection of the specific problem at hand to the larger reality of the social order that surrounds us. This would include finding and exposing the commonalities between various struggles as well as the differences that can enhance a broader struggle of revolt.

Because we anarchists come to any struggle with a specific revolutionary perspective, it is in our interest to propose a methodology of struggle which carries this perspective in it, a principled methodology which provides a basis for our complicity in any struggle. The methodology of which I speak is not just a methodology for struggle, but something to apply to all of life as far as possible. First of all, the struggle must be carried out with complete autonomy from all representative organizations. We need to recognize unions and parties as usurpers and determine our specific activities in any struggle for ourselves, without regard for their demands. Secondly, our practice needs to be that of true direct action—figuring out how to accomplish the specific tasks we pose ourselves on our own, not demanding any authority or any "representative" of the struggle to act for us. Thirdly, we need to remain in permanent conflict with the social order we oppose with regard to the specific matter at hand, keeping our attacks up in order to make it clear that we have no intention of being recuperated. Fourthly, we need to be on



the attack, refusing to negotiate or compromise with those in power. This methodology carries within it both the principle of self-organization and the revolutionary necessity to destroy the present ruling order.

Because of the nature of our anarchist aspirations, our intervention in struggles will always express itself as a tension on several levels. First of all, as I said most of us are ourselves among the exploited and dispossessed of the current social order, not part of the ruling or managing classes. Thus, we face the same immediate realities as those around us, with the same desire for immediate relief. But we also have a desire for a new world and want to bring this desire into all of our struggles not just in words, but in the way we go about our practice. Thus, there is the tension of willfully moving toward autonomy and freedom under oppressive conditions. In addition, we have specific ways in which we desire to go about our struggles and live our lives. These methods are based upon horizontal relationships and the refusal of hierarchy and vanguardism. So there is the tension of striving to find ways of putting forth our conceptions of how to go about struggle that encourage already existing tendencies toward self-organization and direct action that do not fall into the methods of political evangelism. We are, after all, seeking to relate as comrades and accomplices, not leaders. And then there is the tension of wanting to act immediately against the impositions of this society upon our lives regardless of the current level of struggle while again avoiding any tendency toward vanguardism. In a sense, anarchist intervention is the tightrope between living our own struggle in our daily lives and finding the ways to connect this struggle with the struggles of all the exploited most of whom do not share our conscious perspectives, a connection that is necessary if we are to move in the direction of social insurrection and revolution. A misstep in one direction turns our struggle in on itself, transforming it into an individual radical hedonism without any social relevance. A misstep in the other direction turns it into just another political party (whatever name one might give it to hide this fact) vying for control of social struggle. This is why we have to keep in mind that we are not seeking followers or adherents, but accomplices in the crime of freedom.

Anarchist intervention can occur under two circumstances: where a self-organized struggle of the exploited is in course, or where a specific situation calls for an immediate response and anarchists strive to encourage self-organized methods of responding. An example of the first situation would be a wildcat strike movement in course in which anarchists could express solidarity, encourage the spread of the strike, expose the betrayals by the union, share a broader critique of the union as institution and share visions of a different way of encountering life and the world than that of working to maintain a certain level of survival. We will look at a variety of other examples below. The second sort of intervention would be something such as the building of a nuclear missile base in the area where one lives or police murder of poor and minority people. These call for an immediate response, and anarchists facing such situations will want to carry out and encourage autonomous responses using direct action rather than making demands of those in power. The precise way in which anarchists might intervene in such situations would vary depending on circumstances. But the point is

**So autonomous self-organization is first of all the individual organizing his struggle against the conditions this world forces upon her on her own terms, finding the means necessary for carrying out that struggle. But among the means necessary are relations with other people, so autonomous self-organization is also a collective practice. But that collective practice is not based upon conforming individuals to an organization imposed on them, but rather on the development of relationships of mutuality....**

always to encourage the tendency towards autonomy, self-organization and direct action rather than to push a political perspective.

### **Some Historical and Current Situations**

Fortunately, since those whose lives are stolen from them frequently reach a level of anger at their condition and distrust for both the rulers and those who claim to represent the exploited, it is not difficult to find examples of the practice of autonomous self-organization. In some of these circumstances, we can also find some examples of intervention by anti-political (if not always specifically anarchist) revolutionaries in these struggles. In addition, I have found one example of an anarchist intervention in response to a specific situation, where they acted to encourage self-organized direct action against the installation of a nuclear missile base in Sicily. Let's look at some of these instances.

#### **Italy 1970s**

During the 1970's, Italy experienced a massive social movement of revolt involving workers, students and poor and exploited youth, with women playing a major role in much of the activity. One of the outstanding characteristics of this movement was precisely its autonomy from the usual organizations that claimed to represent the struggle of the exploited. Neither unions nor parties led the movement and suspicion of these organizations was high and became higher as blatant attempts by parties and unions to recuperate or discredit the struggles exposed their real nature.

In the course of these struggles, a variety of different forms of wildcat strike, massive demonstrations, sabotage, massive occupations of housing and other spaces, street battles with



cops and fascists and a great number of other forms of direct action took place throughout the country. In addition, armed struggle began to develop in a variety of forms, often lacking the spectacular and specialized form of groups like the Red Brigades. In order to communicate the realities of this struggle with each other and to coordinate activity, spontaneous assemblies developed in factories, occupied universities and neighborhoods. The often vehement discussions and debates raised questions of the nature of this society and of how to fight against it to very high levels, including questioning of work as such and not just of specific working conditions, of marriage and the family as sources of oppressive gender and age relationships, of the technological apparatus and the nature of production and so on.

Of course, there were many anarchist and other anti-political revolutionaries involved in this movement. Their interventions took a variety of forms of which I will mention just a few. There were the myriads of publications for spreading anarchist and anti-political analyses of the insurrection in course. A large number of pirate radio stations came into existence helping enhance the spread of information about specific struggles within the area in which they were located. In addition, many anarchists (and others) would come together in small affinity groups to carry out specific attacks and acts of sabotage relating to specific aspects of the ongoing struggle. Most of these groups were temporary with the aim of a completing a specific action. One specific armed group, Azione Rivoluzionaria (AR) also grew out of an anti-political, anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist perspective. In reading its communiqués and theoretical texts, it becomes clear that the group was largely influenced by Vaneigem. For all practical purposes, it was an informal federation of affinity groups that carried out various armed attacks against the institutions of power. Unlike the Stalinist Red Brigades, which definitely intended to be the armed party leading the proletariat to victory, AR simply saw itself as a step toward the generalization of armed struggle. Nonetheless, it carried out its attacks in a fashion that allowed it to be spectacularized and separated from the larger struggle, thus on a practical level becoming specialists in one particular tool of struggle.

The insurgent struggle of the 1970s in Italy advanced quite far. Certainly many smelled revolution in the air (including, unfortunately, the authorities). It would be impossible to know to what extent the specific activity of anarchists or other anti-political revolutionaries actually influenced the direction of the general revolt, but certainly much of the intervention (from pirate radio to sabotage and beyond) was useful. And the ways in which many of the autonomous struggles—particularly small-scale actions—were organized are reminiscent of ideas and practices of the anarchists influenced by Galleani's ideas. If groups like Azione Rivoluzionaria fell into a specific role, thus blunting the usefulness of its activity, many did not, and there was a capacity for serious critique in the midst of struggle which allows us to learn from the events.

Ultimately, severe state repression combined with the sowing of misunderstanding among those in revolt led to the dissipation of this movement. When the state hit, the movement was not prepared to defend itself. Although hints of the possibility for generalizing armed struggle existed (individuals

who were not part of any specialized armed group were beginning to arm themselves for defense purposes), the combination of statements from certain left groups saying that the time was not ripe for armed conflict combined with the media's spectacularization of specialized armed groups to prevent any clarity on this question. Nonetheless, a great deal of anarchist analysis of these times does exist examining the questions of how insurgent struggles develop, of anarchist intervention, of armed struggle and so on. And a great deal of experimentation and exploration along these lines continues in Italy to this day.

### Spain 1976-1979

In December 1975, Franco, who had been dictator of Spain for more than 35 years, died. As a new regime tried to reestablish order in the form of a democratic state, a wildcat movement broke out opening possibilities for a new society in which states and bosses would have no place. The wildcat movement reflected several aspects of the times: the opening provided by the fall of the Franco regime, the restructuring of Spanish capital desired by the ruling class at the expense of workers, the kowtowing of the unions and the various parties of the left to the demands of the ruling class in the hope of legalization, the readiness of the exploited to grasp this opportunity to act in their own interests.

The struggle spread through a large number of cities in Spain. Workers blockaded streets, went on flying pickets to spread news of the strike elsewhere, set up barricades, battled police and occupied factories and other spaces. The various actions of the strikers were organized through daily factory assemblies where real decisions were made and bi-weekly joint assemblies which only had a coordinating function. In addition, as the movement spread, neighborhood assemblies also formed, spreading the struggle against exploitation throughout the terrain of daily life. Interestingly, it was the spread of the assembly movement beyond the factories that led to deeper critiques and the questioning of wage labor itself.

The greatest weakness of this movement seems to be its tolerance for union and party hacks within the assemblies. These servants of the various oppositional bureaucracies were, of course, always calling for moderation and negotiation, and attempting to gain control of the assemblies. Though they were usually ignored, they were not driven out of the assemblies and in several incidents, they undermined struggles in course by usurpation and negotiation with the rulers. This played a major role in the eventual dissipation of this revolt.

Since Spain has such a strong anarchist history, anarchists undoubtedly played a significant role in this struggle. But not through any of the well-known organizations. The best known "anarchist" organization in Spain, the CNT, proved again that it is first of all a *labor union*, that is to say, an organization that *represents* the struggles of workers in negotiation with the bosses. Like all of the other unions, it was seeking legalization in the new regime, and so played the same role as it did—one of trying to manipulate the struggles in the direction of moderation and compromise.

On the other hand, there were anti-political revolutionaries involved in the wildcat movement in various ways. During that time anonymous writings were spread analyzing the



situation from an explicitly revolutionary perspective and exposing the manipulations of the unions and parties. One group, whose members called themselves "Uncontrollables", using the derogatory term that everyone from republicans to CNTistas used against those revolutionaries who would not obey the compromising leaders in the 1930s, offered ongoing analyses of the situation.

In addition, there were the "autonomous groups" that were active later in the movement. These groups were made up of individuals from the exploited classes with a revolutionary analysis who decided to cease working and live outside the law, taking part in the struggles from this point. Their practice started from their own needs and desires, but since these included solidarity with others, their acts of expropriation, vandalism and sabotage would reflect this complicity. They did not see themselves as any sort of specialists, but simply as individuals who had made a choice about how they wanted to live here and now in battle with this social order, and acted on that choice. Their interventions were precise and targeted so as to be understood in terms of the wildcat movement in course.

### **Comiso, Sicily 1982-3**

In December 1979, the US made an agreement with the Italian government to house cruise missiles in Italy. The agreement was made in secret, but in spring 1981, the news began to leak out. An airport near the town of Comiso in southern Sicily had been chosen as the base in which to house 112 nuclear missiles. Immediately, there was anger over this obvious intrusion into the lives of the people of the area. People began discussing the matter and anarchists took part in these discussions, distributing leaflets and attending meetings about the base.

The usual recuperators were on the scene right away, with the parties of the left forming peace committees aimed at symbolic protest to influence the decisions of the rulers. But anarchists and other revolutionaries, interested in the radical potential of the angry people of the region, formed an Organizing Group aimed at an approach based on direct action and attack.

While the peace committees organized massive symbolic demonstrations demanding "peace," the anarchists and other revolutionaries of the Organizing Group debated on how to develop and concentrate the struggle in Comiso and other areas facing similar intrusions with specific objectives for struggle. Anarchists from Catania said the struggle should take place on a social and revolutionary basis, using a methodology of attack aimed at striking the people and structures responsible for the decision to install the base. In 1982, due to irresolvable contradictions, the Organizing Group split.

In April 1982, peace committees organized another peace march in Comiso. It was the usual pacifying bullshit, reflecting the opportunism of the leftist parties. So in May, the anarchists of Ragusa and Catania decided to intervene in order to bring together the massive opposition to the base, with the aim of occupying the base site.

Throughout the next few months they held a series of public meetings and distributed leaflets and other literature on the topic. Anarchist women went door-to-door in order to talk with the women of the region who rarely left their

homes due to the extremely patriarchal nature of the regional culture. There was a positive response from the local population, so the anarchists proposed a method for organizing the struggle in an autonomous manner. Sicily has known insurgence in the past, and one of the common forms self-organization took was the self-managed league. Anarchists recommended that people consider adopting this form again for this struggle. An anarchist conference took place on July 31-August 1 ending with another open-air meeting in which the struggle against the missile base was connected with refusal of militarism as one anarchist destroyed his conscription papers.

Self-managed leagues began to develop and anarchists set up a coordinating office for technical assistance and to facilitate communication between the leagues. Anarchists continued to hold public meetings and distribute leaflets. As leagues were forming among workers, students, unemployed and so on, various actions, often aimed at taking the time and space necessary for discussing the matter took place. In particular, high school students in Vitoria carried out strikes, using the time to discuss what to do.

In the meantime the effects of the base became clearer and clearer as local peasants were evicted from their land to make room for missile test ranges, as American and NATO officers reserved use of various hotels and other services and as the Mafia used intimidation and terror to try to frighten those who opposed the base. (In Sicily, the Mafia remains a significant part of the power structure. It also clearly recognized several areas of profit in the coming of the base ranging from its "legal" operations to prostitution and drugs.) Anarchists continued to contact workers, unemployed, students and housewives in the area, but the forces of repression acted to obstruct their activity through intimidation, false information and so on.

The occupation itself never occurred. As the project went forward a large number of anarchists came to Comiso, and most felt that the occupation was much too risky at that time. Nonetheless, the ongoing activity against the base during this time did lead to a number of explosive situations and certainly indicated the openness of many people in the area to self-organized struggle. The initiative ended with a huge demonstration that went to the missile base. The cops made several violent attacks against the demonstrators that lasted for several hours. The cops, in fact, pursued demonstrators for several kilometers. The missile base went into operation in the mid-1980s, but was taken out of operation in 1992.

What is interesting in this initiative is not its success or failure, but the attempt to encourage a self-organized revolt against the base as opposed to the symbolic protests that the Italian Communist Party and other parties of the left were promoting. To this end, anarchists showed the connections between the missile base and the realities of exploitation in the area—the eviction of peasants from their land, the worsening economic situation for workers, the transience of the jobs promised during the period that the base was being built, etc. They also referred back to past insurgence in the region, bringing up methods of self-organization that developed in those instances. Beyond this, they simply helped to provide necessary tools. Did they escape the practice of politicking in the way they went about this? It seems to me that they did, but this is a matter for debate.



## Albania 1997

In 1997, an uprising took place in Albania in which the apparatus of power was nearly dismantled. As is so often the case, the uprising was sparked by immediate banalities rather than grand ideologies. At the encouragement of Albanian president Sali Berisha, huge numbers of Albanian families had invested all their savings in a few finance companies that promised huge profits. These companies apparently operated some version of a pyramid scheme. In January, these companies went bankrupt one by one, depriving the already impoverished Albanian populace of what little they had.

The Socialist Party called a demonstration in the capital hoping to make itself leader of a peaceful protest movement. The rage expressed at the demonstration showed all the parties that this explosion was not controllable. Violent demonstrations spread further and further. Police stations, courts, and ministerial and party offices were attacked with stones. Town halls were set on fire. The vice premier was held hostage and beaten. Parliament was attacked and there was a prison revolt. All within the first couple of weeks.

As the resistance spread attacks against the structures of the state and capital increased. People began arming themselves through attacks on police stations, through raids on military armories (in which the conscripted soldiers were often complicit) and by various other means. Where at first demands were made, attacks became the usual practice. Government buildings, party headquarters, police headquarters, banks and the offices of the secret service all became fair game for attack. As the revolt spread, more and more people were armed. They were able to set up blockades to stop riot-control vehicles moving between various towns. They would disarm the police (thus, arming themselves further), strip them and burn their vehicles. Even Berisha's public residence was attacked and torched. Prisons, as well, were attacked and prisoners freed. The insurgents showed practicality in storming and taking weapons from police stations (and freeing any prisoners in custody) before burning them, as well as in always making police operations more and more difficult by stealing or destroying police equipment. Everyone—men, women and children—armed themselves to fight the police and the military. Barricades and blockades were set up in the regions where the insurgents had control in anticipation of government counter-attack. Police agents were sometimes captured or killed; military personnel often deserted and joined the insurgents.

As it became more obvious that the Albanian military would not be able to defeat the insurgents (due in part to desertions), the forces of recuperation came into play. The leaders of the opposition parties, defining themselves as representatives of the insurgents declared conditions for the surrender of arms by the rebels—conditions that merely meant a change of government. None of this, of course, was done at the request of the insurgents.

In the meantime, insurgents continued to attack government buildings, to loot shops, to arm themselves and to build defenses. Much of the military deserted, either joining the insurgents or fleeing to Greece. The spread of the revolt forced Berisha to attempt a reconciliation with some opposition parties in an effort to recuperate the resistance. Public Health Committees, consisting of members of opposition

parties that wanted to control and tame the insurgency, were formed in a number of insurgent towns. When they approved the agreement Berisha made with the Socialist Party, insurgents ignored the PHC, and made their own decisions. The insurgency was spreading rapidly and countries bordering Albania began to fear that it would spread across borders. By mid-March, the government, including the secret police, was forced to flee the capital. Looting of arms and goods was rampant, and the secret service headquarters and the State Bank were attacked.

At this point the EU promised a "humanitarian intervention" with fifty thousand troops as well as technical advisers to help the Albanian authorities reestablish functioning police and military forces. By this time, the insurgency had reached the point where an Albanian minister claimed, "There are no functioning prisons." By the end of March, outside military intervention began. Between April and August, the combination of repression, recuperation and military occupation restored public order. With the elections at the end of June, it could be said that the threat of revolution had disappeared due to the return of politics and on August 12 the multinational forces left Albania.

Even after the fall of Hoxha's "Communist" regime, Albania has not been the easiest place from which to get information, so it is hard to know precisely how the insurgents organized their struggles. It appears that they did form assemblies. There were also "insurgent councils," though whether they were truly autonomous organizations of the exploited, or organizations for recuperation by oppositional parties is not known. Since much of Albania is still fairly rural, it seems likely that old peasant structures offered some basis for creating horizontal decision-making structures.

Because of the large extent of Italian economic interests in Albania, it played a major role in the international suppression of the revolt. At the same time, Italian anarchists sought to examine the situation and figure ways of expressing solidarity with the Albanian insurgents. Unfortunately, the immediate repression they were facing due to the Marini investigation limited their possibilities, particularly as a number of these anarchists found themselves in prison.

## Bolivia 2000 – present

There has been much unrest in South America over the past several years and Bolivia has been a center of some of the most interesting activity. There have been a number of reasons for the rebellions in Bolivia: the government's attempts to give control of water rights to foreign powers; the situations of various workers, indigenous groups, coca farmers (cocaleros), small debtors; the government's attempts to sell natural gas rights to multinationals, etc. These official decisions have been met with road and city blockades, strikes, rioting, attacks on police stations and other government buildings, various acts of sabotage and so on. The protests have tended to be ongoing, keeping the pressure on, forcing at least one president out of office. There has also been quite a bit of coordination of activities.

Although unions and parties, as well as other political organizations have had some involvement with the various revolts, it has generally seemed to be peripheral and aimed toward moving things in the direction of reform and the establishment of a "more democratic" government. Nonethe-



less, certain of the leaders of these groups seem to have more influence than is healthy on the movement.

But despite this reformist factor, the method of struggle in the past few years has generally taken the form of autonomous direct action. Indigenous farmers of the plateaus and cocaleros have turned to traditional informal and non-hierarchical methods of organization as ways of organizing their struggles. At one point, those in struggle called for the abolition of parliament and the development of popular assemblies, indicating a desire for the self-organization of life as well as of the immediate struggles. In addition, the high plateau farmers and cocaleros responded to repression by beginning to arm themselves.

Anarchists have been very much involved in these revolts. Juventades Libertarias (Libertarian Youth) has been active in the struggles, participating, providing immediate critiques of the recuperative activities of unions, parties and political groups and getting news to the outside.

Mujeres Creando (Women's Initiative), an anarchy-feminist group, has been very active as well, particularly in helping small debtors organize their struggles. Perhaps the best known action was when small debtors armed with dynamite and molotov cocktails, among whom were women involved with Mujeres Creando, took over three government buildings.

The struggles in Bolivia have been particularly interesting in several ways. All groups of the exploited, each with their own specific problems and experiences, have been able to coordinate their revolt, acting in solidarity. Methods of self-organization that are useful for the struggle have been found in the indigenous traditions of the country. Anarchists have played a very significant part in the struggles and frequently exposed recuperating forces.

### **Kabyle region, Algeria 2001-present**

In April 2001, police in the area of Tizi Ouzou in the Kabyle region of Algeria killed a high school boy. Riots began immediately in Beni-Douala, a village of the area. Riots and demonstrations quickly spread to the other towns and villages of the region. Rioters attacked police stations and troop detachments with stones, molotov cocktails and burning tires, and set fire to police vehicles, government offices and courts. The targets of attacks quickly widened to include all sorts of government buildings, the offices of political parties and of Islamic fundamentalist groups. By the end of April the entire Kabyle region was in open insurrection. Government attempts to suppress the insurrection led to open conflict with death and injuries on both sides.

The region already had an ancient indigenous tradition of village and regional assemblies. Thus, it was simple enough to begin to hold these assemblies as a way of organizing the struggle. In addition, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century a movement of resistance to French colonial rule had developed a method for coordinating the activities of village and regional assemblies known as the *aarch*. This was also revived. Its purpose is purely coordination, and the delegates from the village assemblies are specifically mandated and revocable at any time. They also must adhere to a very interesting "code of honor." Through this form of self-organization, the people of Kabyle have organized massive demonstrations, general strikes, actions against the police and against the elections.

By mid-June, state control in the region had been almost

**By mid-June, state control in the [Kabyle] region had been almost completely routed, police headquarters were in ruins and the police themselves were completely shunned, forcing the government to supply them with food and other basic needs via helicopter and armed convoys.**

completely routed, police headquarters were in ruins and the police themselves were completely shunned, forcing the government to supply them with food and other basic needs via helicopter and armed convoys. The *aarch* refused to meet with the government, and in mid-July, the *aarch* "code of honor" went into effect which required delegates "not to carry forward any activities or affairs that aim to create direct or indirect links to power and its collaborators," "not to use the movement for partisan ends or drag it into electoral competitions or any other possibility for the conquest of power," "not to accept any political appointments in the institutions of power," etc. This pledge was put to the test immediately when unionists and party members tried to infiltrate the movement. The failure of their attempt to hijack the movement was made clear when demonstrators at a general strike chanted, "Out with the traitors! Out with the unions!"

When government officials tried to convince certain people in the *aarch* to negotiate, insurgents banned all government officials from the Kabyle region. Those who attempted to enter would be greeted with stones. In October, demonstrators tried to present a list of demands to the government, but were greeted with severe repressive measures. In response the *aarch* and other assembly groups decided that they would no longer submit their demands to the government, that the demands were absolutely non-negotiable and that anyone who sought negotiation with the government would be kicked out of the movement. Among the demands was the removal of all police brigades from the region.

Complete refusal of compliance with the state became the norm in Kabyle. When police dared to reappear on the street conflict was immediate, and to a great extent police were driven out of the region. The movement was also able to coordinate two massive election boycotts in which almost no one in Kabyle turned out to vote and in Algeria as a whole, voter turnout was greatly reduced.

In late 2002-early 2003, the Algerian government took repressive action against the movement and particularly against the *aarch*. There were hundreds of arrests, but there was also ongoing action in protest. Although the repression has slowed down insurgent activity and police have returned to the region, the revolt has not stopped. Rioting continues to be the usual response to state negligence as well as atrocities. In addition, Algerian president Bouteflika can expect to be welcomed with rioting and a hail of rocks



**Argentina has an old anarchist history, so it should be no surprise that there are several anarchist groups there. What is surprising is how ill-prepared they were for this uprising. In fact, the first statement I saw from Argentine anarchists was distancing itself from the looting and rioting, very nearly speaking of it as mere hooliganism.**

whenever he visits the Kabyle region. The *aarch* called for a general strike in the region that happened on March 18 (2004) and another election boycott for the most recent presidential election (April, 2004).

It is doubtful that there are many self-proclaimed anarchists in Algeria. Outside Algeria, in Italy and France, a number of anarchists spread information about the struggle and took actions in solidarity. It is questionable whether direct intervention in Algeria would be appropriate or helpful, but solidarity activity here most certainly would.

#### **Argentina 2001-?**

Well before the uprising of December 2001, there had been unrest in Argentina. A crumbling economy was having devastating effects, and with an unemployment rate of more than 25%, the jobless, among others, were already involved in massive protests involving blockades and other forms of direct action. But in December 2001, the Argentine economy began to collapse. People started to withdraw their money from banks and the Economic Minister placed a limit on how much could be withdrawn. The response was immediate. On December 20, rioting and looting began in Buenos Aires along with massive demonstrations. Banks and government institutions were attacked. Though often portrayed as a "middle class" movement, it in fact encompassed all of those outside of the political and economic ruling class. (The term "middle class" is relatively meaningless as it is used today. In the context of this uprising it refers to the fact that among those effected by the collapsing economy were people in occupations that paid moderately well, not just the poor.)

The rioting, looting and demonstrations spread far beyond Buenos Aires, involving all major cities and large portions of the country. In demonstrations, people often called for the complete dismantling of the government, and in fact during the first several weeks of the uprising, several presidents were forced to give up power.

Already in December, the first neighborhood assemblies began to appear in Buenos Aires with the aim of providing space for people to discuss the problems they faced and how they wanted to go about their struggles. The assemblies took place on street corners and in parks. Being open assemblies, of course, the vultures from the political parties and unions

came in hopes of taking over the movement, but their attempts to proselytize were not tolerated. As the uprising spread, so did this method of self-organization, adapted to the specific situation.

While demonstrations, attacks upon government institutions and businesses, blockades and even attacks on specific politicians (one despicable fellow was beaten in a restaurant where he was eating) continued, the assemblies began to take other kinds of actions as well. Spaces were occupied in order to develop various activities and projects. Workers also occupied factories and held factory assemblies. There were several meetings between workers of occupied factories, people of the neighborhood assemblies and those in unemployed groups to discuss where to take the struggle. This was a significant question, because the various occupations meant that more and more of the tools through which the present society functioned had been reappropriated by insurgents. The question really was what to do with them.

The places occupied by the neighborhood assemblies were already looked upon as spaces for those involved to carry out activities and projects they found desirable. The workers at occupied factories seemed less clear about creating something truly new. In fact, a number of the workers simply started production back up under "workers' control." In one factory, the demand was "nationalization with workers' control." There has been no new news from Argentina since word of these occupations. It is possible that the "realism" of the workers, or the simple difficulty of trying to live differently when the world continues to follow the path of exploitation and domination has cooled things down for now.

Argentina has an old anarchist history, so it should be no surprise that there are several anarchist groups there. What is surprising is how ill-prepared they were for this uprising. In fact, the first statement I saw from Argentine anarchists was distancing itself from the looting and rioting, very nearly speaking of it as mere hooliganism. Of course this changed, but nonetheless, the anarchists there seemed to take their time catching up to the movement. Once they did, they were active participants in neighborhood assemblies, occupations and the like, and one can assume they played a part in maintaining the suspicion of politicians and leaders that was such a healthy part of the revolt.

#### **Basilicata, Italy, November 2003**

The governor of the region of Basilicata had the unwelcome surprise last November of finding out that sometimes people don't just sleep through the decisions that are being made over their lives. The governor had made an agreement to build a nuclear waste deposit site in the region, near to the town of Scanzano Jonica. The people of this town did not just sit back. Nor did they go out with petitions to beg their governor to change his mind. Instead they decided to take direct action, blockading the roads of the entire region and shutting it down.

There were no political groups of any sort involved in the organization of this activity. Rather people met together in assemblies to discuss the question and to organize the blockades. Apparently one small-time politician did try to get involved, but found no welcome. For several weeks in November, the movement kept the region blockaded. By the end of November, the governor took back his plan of



building the nuclear waste deposit site. Although the people of Scanzano Jonica stopped the blockades then, they have continued to hold general assemblies to discuss the realities of their lives. Their distrust for those in power is obvious, and the continuation of the assemblies provides a potential basis for further struggles.

I have not heard of any anarchists taking part directly in this struggle, but if there are anarchists living in the region, I assume that they participated. The movement itself expressed in practice the essential elements: a practice of direct action, the development of a method for direct, horizontal communication and coordination, a distrust of political solutions and a refusal to negotiate or back down.

#### **Wildcat strikes in Italy, Winter 2003-4**

On December 1, 2003, the streetcar drivers of Milan went out on a wildcat strike for the day. The day was a good one for such an action, because it was also the first day of an official summit on the environment in Milan—a summit in which political and economic leaders would discuss how to minimize the damage and depletion of resources while continuing to maximize profit and power. The immediate reason for the strike was the loss of real wages due to inflation and the betrayal of previous contracts. However, from the beginning the strike reflected a broader anger at the outrages of the bosses and the complicity of the unions in these outrages.

On December 15, there were wildcat actions by streetcar drivers all over Italy. In Turin and Brescia, the drivers went on strike and many of them burned their union cards. In several other cities there were massive sick-ins by the drivers. A few days later, airport workers in Rome staged a wildcat strike, blockading the entrances to the airport, to protest impending lay-offs.

On December 19, the unions signed a new agreement with the transit bosses over the heads of the transit workers. The response was immediate as transit workers throughout Italy staged wildcat strikes, sick-ins and “work-to-rule” slowdowns over the next several days. Spontaneous assemblies were created in many stations and more and more workers were burning their union cards.

On December 22, despite a government back-to-work order, the strikers chose to continue the struggle. Police were called in to force them back to work, but in some places, such as Brescia, workers were able to repel police attacks.

Various wildcat actions continued, with a few strikes in January. On January 9, the base unions (COBAS and other legally recognized rank and file organizations) called a nation-wide legal strike to protest the union agreement of December 19. Because these unions, despite their relatively decentralized form, are nonetheless essentially organs for negotiation like the large confederal unions, this can be seen as a recuperative event. Nonetheless, in Genoa, the transit workers chose to make the strike illegal. On January 12, workers in Milan staged a surprise wildcat strike. The government issued another “back-to-work” order. The Milanese workers defied it, extending their strike through January 13 as well. And on January 19, airport workers in Rome once again shut down the airport for eight hours.

In addition, there have been struggles going on against Alfa Romeo, protesting layoffs. In some of these actions, the laid-

**Riots, uprisings and insurrections are not generally inspired by grand ideas, utopian dreams or total theoretical critiques of the social order. Often the spark that sets them off is quite banal: economic instability, bad working conditions, betrayal by those who claim to represent one's rights, police brutality. These seemingly minor details spark revolt....**

off workers and those still employed have acted together. In addition, it appears that workers in the metal industry, fed up with the complicity of the union with the bosses, have been taking note of the wildcat actions of transit workers. However, the Alfa-Romeo struggles seem to be largely under the control of the base unions, and beyond the expression of dissatisfaction, I have heard of no specific action taken by the metal workers. So it is hard to say where this might lead. In fact, for now it seems that things have calmed down.

The assemblies in the stations and the blockades of public ways that were the main method of these strikes provided a space for some direct communication between transit workers and others. In some of the strikes, other workers and supporters of the strikers took part in blockades. By the end of January broader assemblies were taking place, but they seemed to have come under control of the base unions. At one such assembly, workers promised to hold meetings in their workplaces to increase support for the transit workers and those of Alfa Romeo. If any transit worker was touched by repression, a mass response would be organized in all the workplaces. But the control by the base unions makes this seem rather suspicious, especially since from the time of their first direct involvement (January 9), there has been no autonomous action outside of the two-day wildcat in Milan.

In February, the hand of repression began to fall. Solidarity committees were formed. Although I haven't heard details, there have apparently been continuing actions by laid-off Alfa Romeo workers and others throughout Italy, though all under the control of the various base unions.

So the situation has calmed. It is hard to know how long the calm will last or what the precise role of recuperative forces was in cooling off this struggle. Certainly without spreading in a truly self-organized manner, the struggle could not have lasted. Most transit workers have families, work under precarious conditions (many as temporary workers or on a probationary training status) and have fairly low wages for unionized workers. The confederal unions were enemies of the wildcats from the start, and the base unions also have their legal status as intermediaries in labor disputes to protect. So the workers cannot count on either. The insurgence of the 1970s in Italy was largely sparked by wildcat activity, but circumstances are different now. So it is hard to



make any predictions.

Anarchists and other anti-political revolutionaries involved themselves in this struggle through flyers and direct communication, expressing solidarity and encouraging people who have been getting free days off school and work due to the strikes to use the time to discover different ways of encountering each other and the world. In addition, sabotage of ticket machines and other transit company property in solidarity with the strikers occurred.

### **A few significant features**

There are a few significant features that stand out in these situations:

- 1) Riots, uprisings and insurrections are not generally inspired by grand ideas, utopian dreams or total theoretical critiques of the social order. Often the spark that sets them off is quite banal: economic instability, bad working conditions, betrayal by those who claim to represent one's rights, police brutality. These seemingly minor details spark revolt when rage combines with a distrust in both the ruling and oppositional institutions. This fact calls for anarchists to avoid an ideological purity that calls for participation only in total struggles. It also calls for the a keen theoretical development capable of immediately understanding specific situations in terms of the totality of domination, exploitation and alienation, and at the same time capable of making a practical application of this theory. This requires a willingness to constantly examine the developing realities around us, making connections that show the necessity for a revolutionary rupture, while at the same time singling out appropriate areas for intervention and appropriate targets for attack.
- 2) When an uprising or spontaneous struggle moves beyond the initial stages, the exploited recognize the need for horizontal communication. Assemblies or something similar are spontaneously developed. The rejection of politics and representation express themselves in these methods. At the same time, there are always party and union hacks, along with other predators, looking for the weak spot where they can "offer assistance." Here again, anarchists and anti-political revolutionaries need to have their shit together to keep an ongoing attack against these recuperative tendencies in play, as well as constantly pushing the struggle in a plainly anti-political direction in which negotiations and, thus, representation have no place.
- 3) Spaces which have tended to bring people together for purposes that are not their own are transformed to the extent possible into spaces for people's own projects. This aspect is of major importance, because the ruling order is doing all it can to shut down or control public spaces. In the 1970s factories could actually provide space for assemblies and other insurgent activities. With changes in the ways production is carried out, this is not a real option any more. Other public spaces are being designed to extend surveillance and limit the possibilities of gathering. This is an area where immediate resistance is necessary and where imagination needs to be focused.
- 4) Where there are traditions and known histories of self-organization, these can often provide a basis for the self-

organization of revolt. Indigenous traditions in particular often provide such structures. On the other hand, where no such traditions exist, imagination and the capacity to be able to create from nothing are essential. This points to another area where immediate resistance is necessary: the increasing degradation of the capacity for creative thought needs to be fought tooth and nail. The standardization of thought into mere calculation and the rote recital of commonplaces must be rejected and countered, so that the capacity to really grapple with situations continues.

### **The Situation in the U.S.**

#### **The absence of a social movement**

None of the examples that I have used come from the United States. This is not because there have been no examples of self-organized struggles and revolt in this country, but most of them are more distant in time and didn't go nearly as far as the events above. There was the wildcat movement among coal-miners in the '60s. Although there were plenty of political hacks around, the anti-war, black liberation and other movements of the '60s also had significant self-organized aspects. The mutinies among American military personnel in Vietnam were self-organized revolts. And in more recent times, apparently in one or two of the cities to which rioting spread after the Rodney King verdict in 1992, spontaneous assemblies actually took place to decide how to go about the rioting and looting effectively.

But in significant ways the situation in the United States now is not the same as it was in the 1960s (and even then different movements and struggles seemed to have trouble connecting), nor is it like Italy or Spain (where, even now, wildcat strikers get support from others, including revolutionaries), Algeria or Bolivia.

Perhaps, the first thing we have to face as revolutionary anarchists in the US is that presently there is no social movement in this country. Collective social revolt only occurs in sudden explosions in response to immediate situations and quickly dissipates as repression and recuperation move in to defuse the situation.

The illusion that there is a movement in this country (to the extent the illusion exists) is the result of specialized activism, the myriad of groups, organizations and networks that publicize this, that or the other cause, issue or ideology. But specialized activism is in fact the very opposite of a social movement for a variety of reasons. First of all, it is essentially political rather than social in nature. The various activist groups *represent* the cause, issue or ideology that is their specialty. This representation can only occur through the reification of whatever reality stands behind the cause of the group, its transformation into a spectacular image (the clear-cut forest, the dead Iraqi baby, the cat with the electrode in its head,...). And this process of spectacularization guarantees that these matters will continue to be perceived in a fragmented manner which maintains the specialized role of the activist groups and prevents any revolutionary analysis or practice in relation to the particular matter in which they specialize. The protests of these activist groups can give the image of resistance, but they do not spring from the daily lives and lived experiences of those involved, and so do not constitute real *social* resistance.

The specialization of activism around spectacular causes



also transforms those involved, at least potentially, into *representatives* of struggle. In the US, this is not a minor matter. The number of times that activist groups and religious leaders have quelled a riotous situation by playing the role of “representatives” of the oppressed before the authorities is truly telling. With cries of “justice” and “rights,” they move an immediate response of rage against this society away from the area of social rebellion and into the area of politics and petition to the authorities. Those who play this role have to be recognized as the enemies of any social movement of rebellion, the guarantee that every immediate rebellion will remain a mere fragment, an event without past or future and without any relationship to rebellions elsewhere—the endless now of the media in which meaningful activity becomes impossible. We can’t let some ridiculous politically correct morality prevent us from exposing their role fiercely.

Specialized activism is itself a symptom of deeper problems. In all of the situations described above, there were levels of social cohesion that do not currently exist in the United States. Without trying to trace all the reasons here, it is necessary to recognize that ours is one of the most atomized societies in existence. Although there have been some significant workers’ struggles in this country since World War 2, these have tended to be isolated, because class consciousness has nearly disappeared in America. To a large extent, workers in this country have acquired “middle class” values of consumption: the desire for the single family house, at least two cars, fancy home entertainment centers, a personal stereo, etc., etc. So many of the products that are deemed desirable, in fact, act in a practical manner to separate people, to prevent communication with those around us. In addition, the well-paid union worker has been so ingrained with the bourgeois work ethic as to see anyone without a job, even the homeless street person, as a leech “living off his taxes.”

In the United States, the question of race cannot be ignored in dealing with this problem. The way this question is often dealt with in anarchist circles, with mental self-flagellation, p.c. moralizing and guilt, is useless from a revolutionary point of view. It is essential rather to note that, on the one hand, the social creation of race was developed through the use of very different methods of exploitation and oppression on people of different skin-colors and cultural backgrounds, and, on the other hand, that the rulers have used these differences in experience to create and maintain deep separations between those of different backgrounds, to guarantee that the exploited continue to be blind to the need to interweave their various struggles in order to more strongly attack the ruling class. It is not a matter of a melting pot, but of a weaving together of different strands of struggle. But as it stands now, in the United States, consciousness of race tends to be far stronger than class consciousness and this plays a major role in enforcing atomization and preventing significant struggles from coming together in a way that could be the basis for a real social movement.

Another factor enforcing alienation and preventing the development of a social movement here is the use of a propaganda of fear as a major factor in social control. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the rhetoric of fear has greatly expanded, but it has always been an important tool of the ruling class. The specter of crime is constantly raised in

the media—before September 11, lightly spiced with terrorism, since then heavily spiced. The various modes of policing and real or (more often) apparent surveillance help to reinforce this message of fear. Others are not to be trusted. This is the basic message. The “never talk to strangers” of our mothers or teachers turns into the standard for adult behavior as well. This is reinforced by the various technological apparatuses that make communication between strangers difficult: personal stereos, cell phones, handheld computer games and the like. In the midst of the crowd, we each remain in our own little world, afraid to come out. Even within the anarchist milieu, the rule of fear finds its place. The very real need for security is often transformed into a paranoid distrust of anyone who doesn’t have the right appearance, thus reinforcing ghettoization in a subculture. If we have any desire for social transformation, it is safer to stay within the confines of the specialized activist milieu. Of course this will guarantee no such transformation occurs.

It would be easy to despair in the face of American social reality. It is difficult to see how any social movement can be revived out of such extensive atomization. And yet, there has been some evidence that among those at the bottom some awareness of a need to actually communicate is developing. The recent economic decline has pushed more people into precarious positions, opening some, at least, to examining deeper questions. Nonetheless, the creation of any real social movement here will have to involve a real and concrete practical rejection of activist politics and exposure and fierce confrontation with the recuperators it fosters. Since we desire a radical social transformation, one of our tasks as anarchists is precisely to encourage those who are becoming outraged at the conditions of their existence in this society to think and act for themselves rather than relying on the various ideologies and organization that will offer to represent their rage and resistance.

## Two examples of the problem

When the Bush administration started to talk of the “necessity” of the current war in Iraq, there was some protest immediately. As the claims of the administration about the reasons for the war became increasingly suspect, the questioning of the war moved far beyond any activist milieu. From January 2003 through the beginning of the war, one saw huge demonstrations in which the vast majority of those involved were not activists. But most of the marches and demonstrations were organized by specialists in activism, petty politicians of the left with their own agendas. In Los Angeles, the activist coalition that organized the demos was dominated by ANSWER (a front group for one of the multitude of ABC-socialist parties) and Not In Our Name (a front group for the Revolutionary Communist Party). The demonstrations were well regulated marches ending in rallies with the typical boring rhetorical speakers—the preachers to the crowd that activists love. Perhaps the most absurd thing was the competition between ANSWER and Not In Our Name for the attention of the crowd. ANSWER would call for a more reserved approach to the protest, while Not In Our Name would call for a more militant approach, but both were obviously seeking to establish their leadership over the movement. I would not be surprised if there were similar dynamics in many other cities. So it comes as no surprise that



the anti-war movement has dwindled back down to a mainly activist movement, and not a particular energetic one. Undoubtedly, with the increasing exposure of the extent of the dishonesty of the administration, there is still a great deal of questioning, but no outlet. Since the morale of American soldiers in Iraq is extremely low and the desertion rate high, it is clear that there is potential for resistance among soldiers, but without a *social* movement of resistance to the war effort, soldiers may feel that they would have no support if they rebelled.

Another example of what can happen when the representatives of struggle take control happened in the neighborhood where I live. In May 2003, three blocks from the house where I was living, a cop murdered a woman who had been in a car they pulled over. There was an immediate response of outrage throughout the neighborhood, with a spontaneous memorial at the place she was killed, and demonstrations and rallies. The woman was an African-American, and in this area religious leaders play a central political role in the African-American "community." So religious leaders immediately imposed themselves as representatives of the outrage, and immediately directed any potential struggle into the "proper channels," calling for nonviolence. A few anarchists wrote and distributed flyers about the nature of the police, but got little response. The trajectory of this particular "struggle" had already been set by the religious leaders who had set themselves up as its representatives, and that direction was toward appeal to the ruling powers to reform their practices, an appeal that proved worthless, since the murdering officer is back on the streets with the authorities and the media protecting his identity.

## Conclusion

Autonomous self-organization would have to be the basis both of a truly free existence and of the struggle to achieve that existence. It is the very opposite of politics and in practice either rejects it or is destroyed by it. The practice of self-organization seems to develop spontaneously when people rise up in revolt. What distinguishes it from politics is its opposition to representation and compromise—not just with the ruling order, but within the self-organized movement itself. Thus, rather than seeking to impose collective decisions involving compromise, it seeks to find a method for interweaving the desires, interests and needs of all involved in a way that is actually pleasing to each. This is not just a minor aspect, but is essential. Once the aim of organizing our struggles and our lives together ceases to be that of finding the ways for interweaving our differing desires, interests and needs so that all find fulfillment and instead becomes that of finding compromises positions, programs and platforms start to take the place of desires, dreams and aspirations. Then, the representatives of the various positions, programs and platforms can find their place in the situation and transform self-organization into politics. It has happened before in revolutionary situations with horrible results.

This gives an indication of the way anarchist intervention is best carried out. We do not need to create any sort of political organization to represent anarchy. To do so would, in fact, be to work against self-organization. Instead we should start from ourselves, our own condition as individuals who have had our lives stolen from us, our struggle against

that condition and our desire to be the creators of our own existence. From this basis, anarchist intervention would not be evangelism for a political program or for true revolutionary consciousness. It would rather be the search for accomplices, the development of relationships of affinity, the intertwining of our desires and passions, of our destructive rage, our ideas and our dreams with those of others in their struggles and revolts. Such a search can find its way in the midst of social movements of revolt, discovering the spreading affinities that offer an informal federation of complicity. It can also find its way where no social movement seems to exist, discovering the hidden veins of other individual revolts seeking complicity, and in these hidden veins perhaps finding the embryo of a new social movement.

In any case this intervention, in refusing politics and its methods, becomes a tension towards revolution and freedom in life and struggle, perpetually pushing against the grain for the destruction of all domination and exploitation, for the end of every practice of specialization and representation including that of specialized activism. It is the tension that springs from knowing what one desires and at the same time knowing that one is facing a world that is designed to prevent one from realizing that desire—knowing, in other words, that one's life is a battle. It is, at the same time, the tension of the complicity of desires in which the differences between individuals create the interweaving harmonies of affinity that indicate the direction for a new truly free way of living. It is in this tension that the specific self-organization of consciously anarchist revolt can find the way to intertwine with the daily struggles of all the exploited at the points where those struggles begin to experiment with direct action and self-organization. A new world based on joy and the exploration of our desires is possible, it will begin to grow wherever the self-organization of revolt against this world flows into the self-organization of life itself.

## Recommended Reading

### Italy 1970's

*Worker's Autonomy* (Bratach Dubh/Elephant Editions)

*Armed Struggle in Italy* (Bratach Dubh/Elephant Editions)

### Spain 1976-79

*Wildcat Spain Encounters Democracy* (publisher unknown)

*A Manuscript Found in Vitoria* (Venomous Butterfly Publications)

### Comiso 1982-3

*Comiso Dossier*

### Albania 1997

*Albania: Laboratory of Subversion* (Elephant Editions)

### Kabyle Region, Algeria 2001-present

*Defense of the Algerian Insurrection* by Jaime Semprun (Venomous Butterfly Publications)

### Wildcat strikes in Italy winter 2003-2004

*The Wildcat Roars in Italy* (Venomous Butterfly Publications)

Information on the uprisings in Bolivia & Argentina can be found at [www.infoshop.org/inews](http://www.infoshop.org/inews) in the S. America section.

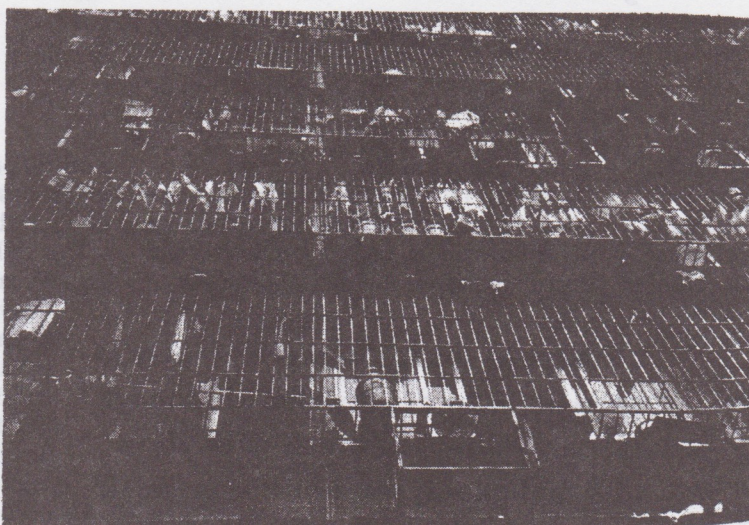
Venomous Butterfly Publications can be contacted at: 818 SW 3rd Ave., PMB 1237, Portland, OR 97204, USA.



# The Meaning of Tiananmen

Continued from page 49

blockages by independent truckers in Los Angeles, obliges local opponents of class-society in any case to address the limitations of present labor struggles and possible means for overcoming them. Our fights do not exist in a vacuum. The methods of contestation being developed in the factories of China should be considered in this light as well. Good examples are contagious and reinforce each other. Just as the greatest assistance the Chinese workers' movement could give us in our war against capital is in the example of their acts, so the greatest aid we might give in return would be the generalization of our struggles against all aspects of this society of domination, across union jurisdictions and sectoral lines between businesses and institutions, and ultimately across national borders, to the point where, society-wide and planet-wide, people begin to discover the power to take control of their lives altogether, beginning the greatest adventure of them all.



"After decades of bitterness, things are what they were before Liberation"  
-common saying among workers in foreign ventures.

Fifteen years of repression have succeeded neither in completely halting the subterranean progress of the movement of opposition, nor, as we have seen in limiting its extent. Indeed, as events this August in Chongqing attest, the class struggle in China may have entered a new phase, wherein the very natures of the ownership of the means of production and of the relations of production themselves may be called into question. There, at the Chongqing Shanhua Special Vehicle Factory (former PLA Factory 3403), located in Huaxi town in the Ba'an district of Chongqing municipality, workers, already owed substantial unpaid wages and denied promised medical insurance, responded to the privatization and restructuring of their factory with a remarkable counteroffensive of their own:

The workers launched their protest action to signal their determined opposition to the local government's recent selling of the factory, which was worth 200 million Yuan, to a private company for a price of only

22 million Yuan. They are angry that the sale was not put out to public tender, and they have made a counter-proposal to the government whereby the workers themselves would purchase the factory at a higher price than the one already agreed to and would then operate the factory on a collective and democratic management basis.

-China Labour Bulletin, Issue No. 19 (22 Sept. 2004)

## Chinese "anarchists" sent home

Algiers - Algeria has sent home at least nine Chinese building workers for committing "acts of anarchy" in a pay dispute, press reports and Chinese diplomats in the north African country said on Monday.

The construction laborers several times put up road-blocks near Tiaret, a town 340km southwest of the coastal capital, at the end of January to demonstrate over three months of wage arrears.

During the protest, which also concerned money not sent to their families in China, the workers trashed a police car and an ambulance, *le Quotidien d'Oran* reported.

Thousands of Chinese expatriates are employed in Algeria's construction industry, working on sites for new housing.

In Algiers, security forces stopped them marching on their embassy and 10 protestors, considered to be the ringleaders by police, were arrested, the *Oran daily* and *Le Jeune Independant* reported....

A Chinese embassy official confirmed that the incidents had taken place and said that nine people, accused of "acts on anarchy" and breaking the law, were flown home at the end of March.

-News 24.com, ed. Anthea Jonathan, April 26th 2004

The workers went on strike and occupied their plant on August 18th. After they had rebuffed an attempt by the district government and the Public Security Bureau to arrest their leaders under the pretext of conducting an investigation, and a subterfuge begun by the Chongqing Municipal Committee to negotiate the removal of confidential documents and weapons (but which might well have jeopardized evidence the workers held of financial impropriety by the factory manager), the authorities resorted, predictably, to force. In the early morning hours of August 30th, more than 1,000 police and paramilitary People's Armed Police forced their way onto the factory and dormitory grounds. During the course of their occupation there were instances of brutality and the disappearance of a young worker. The same day personnel from the new owner, Endurance Industrial Stock Co. Ltd., entered to take over the factory and general area.

Here then is an example of where the struggle between workers and the alliance of bureaucrats and private capitalists that presently manages China now stands. If the end of bureaucratic capitalism in China has been postponed, its future remains far from secure.

This essay originally appeared as a pamphlet published by Antimatter, PO Box 700754, San Jose, CA 95170, USA.



# Post-Leftists!

## One more Effort if you would be Anti-Leftist!

by John Zerzan

**F**or a while now there's been quite a lot of talk about the "post-Left." An idea, it seems, whose time has come. More recent still is an already persistent question concerning what was initially announced, let us say, in the anti-WTO streets of Seattle '99. Namely, is this "movement" (for want of a better word) already petering out? I think there's an important connection between the question of the post-Left and that of the momentum—or lack of it—of our anarchy project in society.

First off, what does post-Left mean? After considerable discussion (e.g. in this zine) the concept remains, I think, fairly content-free. Its origins and substance routinely avoided, though there's an apparent consensus that it's a positive thing.

What accounts for this topic is just possibly also what accounts for some discomfort and evasion, as people want to be post-Left, but maybe not really. Many have noticed that at the heart of the Left is productionism, the Marxist idea that the means of production/ technology should continually develop. This progressive (and inevitable) movement is the bearer of an inherently liberatory potential. From this observation about the Left and the refusal of this cardinal value, it isn't really too far to an indictment of civilization. Which on a more fundamental plane, driven by specialization and domestication, ends up progressively domesticating/colonizing life on this planet and bringing on the current general crisis.

Without fleshing this out further, it becomes clear that there are many implications to this critique of the Left kind of thinking. (Enter all the "Why I'm not a Primitivist"-type articles?) For some, post-Left thinking needs to remain vague and unspecific in order to avoid various implications. Such as a clear, ordered indictment of technology and civilization; this is

seen as going too far.

Another related cohort, of late, is composed of "anti-civ" folks whose definition of civilization is vague or limited, and doesn't require any unpleasant revision of

**Everyone knows something new is needed. Who doubts that this must mean a definitive break with all of this malignant, no-future system? If anarchists keep on respecting the Left in various ways, instead of loudly, clearly trashing it, we'll go nowhere.**

their previous politics. A parallel is the rising number of "anarchists" who have adopted the label, but remain liberals (for example). The leftward lurch of Wolfi Landstreicher is a specific case in point: he is "anti-civ" along the lines of a reformist community organizer like Chris Crass. That is to say, having no discernable or operative opposition to civilization after all.

There are California friends of mine whose post-leftism also seems to be without consequences. "Anarchist" Internet chat pages feature figures who have been leftist for years. One or two prominent post-Left writers even organized a weekend conference (Bay Area, Spring 2004) to bring "anti-state" communists and post-leftists together.

This kind of seemingly eternal dance makes me wonder sometimes whether anarchism will ever break with the Left. We've seen that what has been going on since Seattle '99 has remained all too largely leftist, with what is new about, say, anti-globalization recuperated back into the Left, to a depressing degree. Speaking of "anti-globalization," is there any truly anti-globalization faction that isn't green

anarchy/primitivist in orientation? An empty post-leftism has challenged nothing at all in this area, as far as I can see.

The failure, so far, of the post-Left to actually supersede the Left is the reason this new "movement" may be losing steam. Sure, there's the negative impact of 9/11 and a subsequently unfolding police state atmosphere. But the question of a new vision is one factor, at least, of the problem.

Everyone knows something new is needed. Who doubts that this must mean a definitive break with all of this malignant, no-future system? If anarchists keep on respecting the Left in various ways, instead of loudly, clearly trashing it, we'll go nowhere.

Is it so hard to understand, for instance, how utterly discredited and unsalvageable the word "communist" is? This is not the nothing-happening 1980s when such matters had no practical bearing. Upholding "communism" is a kiss-of-death practice, ensuring the irrelevance of anarchy.

Fortunately, a growing number are openly, necessarily anti-Left, proceeding away from this horror show and all of its foundations. Sincerely anti-civilization groups and their projects are showing up in countless places around the world. This offensive is under way, and it does explicitly include exposing and denouncing the Left as part of what we must jettison once and for all.

Residents of the halfway house of the post-Left must choose. As this rotten-to-the-core order exhibits even greater levels of disease, debasement, uniformity, cheapening, exhaustion, and self-destruction, our turn is coming to play a public role. Will we remain in a limited, failed tradition of Leftist opposition? Or will we see that far deeper dreams, explorations, and aims are called for?



# C.A.L. Press Books

## Elements of Refusal

John Zerzan's first collection of essays in a new, expanded Second Edition! "Here it is axiomatic that art, language, time, industrialism, number, technology, work and other aspects of our social lives—all hailed as the liberators of humanity—are, in fact, the co-conspirators of domestication and domination."—from the Preface. (C.A.L. Press, 1999) 320 pp. **\$14.95** paper. [Look for a new hardcover edition soon.]

## Anarchy after Leftism

Bob Black's recent—and possibly most entertaining—book. A compact, intelligent & compelling demolition job on both Murray Bookchin's atrocious *Social Anarchism vs. Lifestyle Anarchism* and his overall philosophical and radical pretensions. Highly recommended. (C.A.L. Press, 1997) 176 pp. **\$7.95** paper.

## Future Primitive & Other Essays

A collection of some of John Zerzan's best critical essays from *Anarchy & Demolition Derby*, including "Future Primitive," "The Mass Psychology of Misery," "The Catastrophe of Postmodernism" & "Tonality and the Totality," along with his "Nihilist's Dictionary." (C.A.L. Press & Autonomedia, 1994) 185 pp. **\$6.95** paper.

## Withered Anarchism

Upcoming collection on the increasingly withered anarchism of Murray Bookchin, featuring critical essays by Bob Black (author of the title essay, "Withered Anarchism"), Lawrence Jarach ("Don't Judge a Bookchin by his Cover-ups"), Jason McQuinn, Michael William and others. (C.A.L. Press, 2004) **\$11.95** paper.

## Revolution of Everyday Life

Raoul Vaneigem's still-explosive masterpiece on radical subjectivity in a world of things and their prices. This book has been serialized in past issues of *Anarchy*, but it's well worth reading & re-reading. One of the two major works of the Situationist International, it played a role in the gestation of the student uprising and general strike of May, 1968 in France. (Left Bank & Rebel Press, 1967, 1994) 279 pp. **\$15.95** paper.

## Against His-Story, Against Leviathan

Fredy Perlman's most important work presents his account of the world history of civilizations from their origins as they devoured primitive peoples and other civilizations on their way to the dead-end we know too well as the present day. A poetic and deeply subversive reversal of perspective on history. (Black & Red, 1983) 302 pp. **\$9.95** paper.

## The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism

Fredy Perlman's penetrating critique of nationalism left and right. This is an essential essay for understanding nationalism without illusions. (Black & Red, 1985) 58 pp. **\$2.95** paper.

## History of the Makhnovist Movement

Peter Arshinov's inspiring firsthand account of the most important anarchist movement of the Russian Revolution, centered on the partisans organized by Nestor Makhno in the Ukraine, who fought Ukrainian nationalists, the Bolshevik counter-revolution and the Czarist White armies from 1918 until defeat in 1921. (Black & Red, 1987) 284 pp. paper. **Currently Out-of-Print!** We'll carry this again as soon as it's reprinted.

## We, the Anarchists!

Stuart Christie's new critical analysis of what went wrong with the FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation) and CNT (anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Workers) during the Spanish Revolution and Civil War, leading to the counter-revolutionary collaboration of these organizations with the Catalan and Spanish governments. (Meltzer Press, 2000) 127 pp. **\$15.95** paper. **NEW and recommended!**

## Running on Emptiness

John Zerzan's most recent collection of essays, subtitled "The Pathology of Civilization." It includes many of his more recent contributions to *Anarchy* magazine, including "Time and Its Discontents" and "That Thing We Do," along with a revealing interview by Derrick Jensen and an autobiographical essay titled "So...How Did You Become an Anarchist?" (Feral House, 2002) 214 pp. **\$11.95** paper. **NEW!**

## Society of the Spectacle

Guy Debord's highly important masterwork updating Marx's theory of commodity fetishism for an electronically-mediated world. "Everything which was once lived has moved into its representation." One of the two central works of the Situationist International. (Black & Red, 1967, 1983) unpaginated **\$7.95** paper.

## Situationist International Anthology

Ken Knabb's definitive translation and collection of the most important articles from the S.I.'s French journal, including those by Asger Jorn, Ivan Chitchevlov, Guy Debord, Raoul Vaneigem, Attila Kótányi, René Viénet & others. Indispensable. (Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981) 406 pp. **\$14.95** paper.

## Journey through Utopia

Marie Louise Berneri's thorough and perceptive study of the most important utopian writings since Plato's *Republic*. (Freedom Press, 1950) 339 pp. **\$9.95** paper.

## Against Civilization

A new anthology of "Readings and Reflections" put together by John Zerzan, including Hesiod on through to the "primitivists" of today, by way of Rousseau, William Morris, and Fourier, among others—51 selections in all. (Uncivilized Books, 1999) **\$9.95** paper. **Currently Out-of-Print!** Only a couple left. We'll carry this again as soon as it's reprinted.

## Passionate and Dangerous: Conversations with Midwestern Anti-authoritarians & Anarchists

Well, maybe not all that "dangerous," but this new survey of the midwestern anarchist scene will give you a lot better idea of who is active and what's going on out there! (1999) 70 pp. **\$4.00** magazine format.

## Anarchy T-Shirts

Sorry, the T-shirts are now completely sold-out. Look for a new design—probably ready by the time the next issue of *Anarchy* comes out!

We still soon hope to get the important new paperback editions of Richard Gombin's *The Origins of Modern Leftism & The Radical Tradition* (**\$7.95**), and Michael Seidman's *Workers against Work* (**\$9.95**) from *Insubordinate Editions*. Please send a S.A.S.E. if you'd like a slightly longer list including additional titles available from C.A.L. Press.

## C.A.L. Press Books

List the books you want to order (or circle them above and photocopy or send the whole page). Include \$2.05 postage & handling for the 1st book or shirt and \$1.05 for each additional book or shirt. (for Priority Mail or foreign Surface Mail include \$4.05 postage & handling for the first book or shirt and \$2.05 for each additional book). Don't forget to specify size & color for shirts.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Add postage & handling \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ (ALL CHECKS MUST BE MADE TO C.A.L.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECKS OUT TO C.A.L. (WE CANNOT ACCEPT CHECKS MADE OUT TO *Anarchy*.) All rates are in U.S. dollars. From outside the U.S. please send checks or money orders in U.S. dollars only. (For checks or money orders made out in foreign currencies you must add U.S.\$15 for conversion.)

Send to: C.A.L., POB 1446, Columbia, MO. 65203-1446

#58



## Strategy & Anarchy

By Aragorn!

### The Myth of Mass

The mass movement model for social change (which will be referred to henceforth as the Mass Model) states that a) the transformation of society can only occur if the vast majority of a society's population desires it; b) this change will occur along the lines of this majority's will; and c) the role of any single person who desires this change—in this time before a majority exists—is to organize discrete communities into the majorities that they need to become. These organizing efforts are along the lines of propaganda as well as campaigns that both achieve specific goals *and* demonstrate the power of people (especially on the grassroots level) to advance material change in social (but particularly political) reality. We'll leave the definition as being this simple while recognizing that it is not.

Deciding how to tackle the complexities of this issue hasn't been easy. Relying entirely on historical examples to demonstrate how ineffective this strategic model has actually been over time has the problem of attracting every nitpicking self-proclaimed historian to argue the details of whatever example is shown. If our post-modern time has demonstrated anything it is that interpretation is often determined by who is the loudest and cares the most about this point or that. Instead I will begin with a discussion about the positive and negative role that mythology plays in any conversation about a different world, how to achieve this world, and where anarchists have fallen in relation to this question. I will then review the politics of the Mass Model. (While I generally accept the big umbrella view of anarchism, even though it means that I am kept dry with many fools, there are lines worth discussing about what is and is not anarchistic about a practice.) Finally I will pursue a strategic analysis of the Mass Model. To the extent that I am going to draw on history it will likely be here. The history of military and social

struggle is far less debatable than any discussion of intentions or the specifics about who did what to whom.

If a mythology is a story that explains a people's understanding of reality then there is no more powerful myth than the one of the Mass Model. The Mass Model describes both the change that is desired in the world and the way in which that change is going to happen. We may experience alienation in our interpersonal relationships and in our daily life, but our belief in a unified transcendental whole that could at any time realize itself and banish alienation is just too rich of an image to exorcise entirely.

We imagine the noble story of Gandhi and his followers standing up to the British monarchy using Satyagraha (non-violence) against nightsticks and rifles until eventually economic boycott (of British products) and voluntary non-cooperation resulted in the expulsion of the monarchy. We know, of course, that no such thing occurred. At best the British left India out of exhaustion at the end of World War II (when the Empire closed up shop generally), and at worst it left as the head of the new movement towards capitalist expansion that's current manifestation is called globalization. This does not stop many anti-authoritarians from believing that the next product boycott, the next peaceful demonstration, or the next arrest is going to move us in the direction of the kind of change that we would want. This is not to say that the effort of thousands of lives did not have a political effect, quite the contrary. Gandhi's Satyagraha movement made him a political force and India's first prime minister.

How about the tale of the Civil Rights movement? This story is told in three parts, the first about the movement created by Martin Luther King Jr., the second about the radicalization of the movement (generally personalized as being about Malcolm X) and finally about the success of the movement as a whole with the signing of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968. This story would have us believe that through the struggle of hard-fought righteous battles, with the masses of the most concerned people, against a clearly defined enemy, distinct material gains can be made. We can be victorious over them if only we unite. The actual result of the Civil Rights movement is not as they promised. The movement created a new class of political operative whose use of Civil Rights rhetoric has planted itself within the mainstream of Democratic Party politics. The other result, and this

one is the harder truth for the Mass Model, is that the class of citizenry that has benefitted the most from the efforts of the Civil Rights movement has not been people of color at all, but white women.<sup>(1)</sup>

Then there is the story of Nelson Mandela. Subject of songs and tales of redemption, he represents the unjustly imprisoned, the truth chained, and a movement forced to arms because of the tyranny of a minority in power. His symbolic power was such that even the American congress overrode a presidential veto to implement an official American boycott of South African products. In the final analysis, though, it was the international pressures for a liberalized economy (and not the African National Congress) that transformed South African society away from its neo-plantation model into a globalized economy.

The mythology of the Mass Model is about the moral authority of one type of social transformation over any other. This has particular resonance with anarchists who struggle with the distinction between the kind of gentler world that they would prefer and the horrors of social revolutions past (Russia, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, etc); anarchists who would rather "do no harm" than have an uncontrollable social change. If the effort that is required to transform society looks like convincing people and not shooting them, the story goes, isn't that far more preferable than taking an authoritarian risk? This is the beauty of the Mass Model as myth. There is no need of a proof-of-concept when you have the inescapable logic of "doing the right thing" on your side. The Mass Model ends up being a code-word for a certain kind of inaction in the face of the totality and not a concrete way in which to struggle against it.

Which is not to say that myths are not inspiring, or that inspiration is bad. Myths can be the stories that frame our discussions, that make our projects clear, and that convey our ideas simply. Mythology as a terrain with which to understand our location then becomes the route that one takes to the market, to our friend's house, and to the future that has yet been written. What myths should not be is the tired parroting of a brain-dead common sense that leaves no room for new stories. As anarchists we, naturally, should get more mileage out of the stories of Emma horsewhipping Johann Most than of Jesus casting out money-changers or Gandhi making his own salt. Our stories should be of the scale that we can live with and

**Continued on next page**



## Demoralizing Moralism

*continued from page 41*

### The effects of morality

Whatever the specific content of compulsory morality, the effects are basically similar. A person's ability to think clearly and act decisively in his or her own interest is compromised or sabotaged. If people are not able to consciously act in their own individual and community interests, they must act instead in the interests of another in some fashion.

In most forms of compulsory morality this other around whose interests values are oriented is an abstract idea rather than a person or persons: God, Science, Nature, etc. (Although there are *always* people and organizations just waiting to exploit the victims of morality by acting as mediators between them and their abstract ideals.) But even in those cases in which values are supposedly oriented towards people or groups of people, they are usually oriented much more towards the abstract *idea* of the person or group than towards any actual, concrete, living persons: the Proletariat or Party (rather than actual workers or the members who make up the party), Humanity (in the abstract rather than in the form of an aggregate of concrete individuals in all their interrelationships), the State, etc. People whose compulsory moralities are organized around these abstract ideas attempt to force themselves to follow their demands because they have displaced their own subjectivity onto them, usually through the influence of years and years of alienating and demoralizing socialization and indoctrination. Rather than understanding and acting for themselves the victims of morality attempt to make themselves the puppets of the abstract ideas they fetishize.

### Living without morality

The radical alternative to morality involves the creation of critical self-theory. The formation of any coherent and effective anarchist perspective and practice requires that people develop (through interaction with their natural and social environments) a relatively sophisticated understanding of themselves and their places in their social and natural worlds. Without a consciously understood subjective locus of understanding, without a

clear focus on one's own personal and social interests, it is impossible to develop a critical social theory that can comprehend social alienation and the possibilities for its supersession. Critical self-theory and critical social theory are two essential poles of one comprehensive project.

Only by developing and maintaining a self-critical understanding of oneself and one's world can people make rational decisions about what their most genuine interests are and how to pursue them. In the 19th century language of Max Stirner, this kind of critical self-understanding was termed "egoism," but today it makes more sense to jettison this outdated, pre-Freudian term in favor of "self-theory."

Critical self-understanding involves the simultaneous development of a finite ethics, a set of values consistent with what are considered one's most important interests, that are expressed in everyday life activities. These values are organic expressions of one's radical subjectivity, of one's self-possession, self-understanding and self-activity. They don't originate outside of one's life, demanding one's subjection, because they originate from one's own direct life-experiences and serve one's own interests.

### Radical moralism?

In the absence of genuinely lived community and a genuinely revolutionary movement, many would-be radicals tend to retreat into other activities that substitute for radical, direct action. One of the easiest traps to fall into is the reduction of the radical project into a moralistic project. Instead of creating a subversively radical social theory in concert with other rebels and putting it into practice with them with the aim of directly eliminating as many aspects of domination and social alienation as possible, the goal becomes the rigidly Manichaean division of the social world into "good" and "bad" parts, with the aim of mechanically suppressing the bad and enlarging the good.

Instead of a dialectical social theory aimed at increasingly sophisticated understanding, moralistic ideologies are aimed at simplistic dividing and labelling with little regard for context or the totality. For environmental moralists, for example, old growth forests and recycling are always good, while SUVs and new housing developments are always bad. Context doesn't matter, resulting in mechanistic strategies aimed at, for example, simply discouraging SUV use and new housing

construction, rather than encouraging the spread of the critique of capital and state as parts of a worldwide system of social alienation and domination.

Moralistic practice tends towards guilt-mongering (towards those who engage in activities labelled "bad") and self-righteousness (since one already has all the answers), and is most easily practiced by those privileged enough to enjoy a wide array of consumer choices.

Examples could also be given for other forms of would-be radical moralism like pacifism, many forms of leftism including most Marxist ideologies, identity politics, feminist ideologies, and various other single-issue struggles.

One of the most empty and self-defeating aspects of morality within the would-be radical milieu is lifestyle moralism, which focusses on moralistic choices of lifestyle options. Instead of acting on the radical critique of all the social institutions which reinforce and justify our alienation and domination, lifestyle moralists elevate their consumer choices to moral choices, which they see as making them better persons than those who do not share them. These lifestyle choices can involve adopting rigid diets (vegetarianism or veganism), wearing a specialized uniform (punk, or working-class), practicing particular forms of sex, or consuming subcultural commodities.

## The Myth of Mass

*continued from previous page*

not the moral exercises of ancient tomes, or truths that are self-evident to those in power and just plain wrong to those of us who will never choose power. Mythologies should be the stories that we share around campfires and not the flags that we carry into battle whether that battle is against the infidels or with the Black Bloc.

Next time I will talk more about what is anarchist, or not, about the Mass Model and begin to talk about the strategic value of the Mass Model from a variety of different perspectives.

1. This is evidenced in several ways, both by the fact that the sex discrimination clause (Title VII) was attached to the Civil Rights act by a southern opponent of the Act with the hope that it would scuttle its passage and by the statistics that show a greater growth of income and education by white women than any other "protected group" of the Act.



## Have something to say? Write us!

We would like to encourage you to write us in order to continue this dialogue, whether you are sympathetic with or critical of anarchist theories and practices. All mailed letters will be printed with the author's name, city and state or country only, unless it is specifically stated that her/his full address may be used, that only initials should be used, or that s/he wishes to remain completely anonymous. Letter writers are also invited to give e-mail addresses.

All e-mails will be printed with the author's name and e-mail address only, unless it is specifically stated that a street address may be used, that only initials should be used, that the e-mail address should not be used, or that the author wishes to remain completely anonymous.

If necessary, we will edit letters that are redundant, overly long, unreadable, excessively boring or contain death threats. (Ellipses in italicized brackets [...] indicate editorial omissions.) Limit length to three double-spaced, typewritten pages or 1,500 words. Address your letters to C.A.L., POB 3448, Berkeley, CA 94703, USA; or by e-mail: [jmcquinn@coin.org](mailto:jmcquinn@coin.org)

## Anti-abortion anarchism?

The Anarchist milieu is wonderfully dynamic in that it consists of a dialog which serves to question and analyze all ideologies and belief systems, thereby seeking to distill all of these and produce a coherent structure of liberation free of all dogmatic limitations. It is because of this supposedly consistent analysis that I am constantly amazed at the complete lack of discussion about the subject of abortion, which is generally folded into the larger envelope of reproductive rights. Regardless of one's beliefs one way or the other regarding abortion, it seems impossible to have a calm, rational discussion about the topic within the confines of the dominant Anarchist channels of discourse. Perhaps I am too young to have taken part in the discourse that put this topic to rest for all time, but it seems as if new individuals entering the Anarchist milieu would at least discuss the existing ideas before swallowing them whole. Towards the goal of initiating a dialog, mostly to help myself form and analyze my own thoughts, I write this letter in the hope of illustrating points of interest and perhaps disagreement that may receive a response. Herein I will outline some of my thoughts as they exist at this point in time, and I

will also question the validity of grouping numerous ideas under the heading of reproductive rights. If I am lucky enough to receive a response, please keep it civil and attack my points of discussion and not me or my place, or lack thereof, in the Anarchist milieu.

It seems that much of the conflict surrounding abortion centers on the human state within the womb, whether unborn child or mass-of-cells. It seems to me that from the point of conception through death one is in a developmental continuum, and to draw a subjective line at which point one transitions from one stage to the next is both illogical and damaging to the beauty that is life. An example of this problem is the strange stage our society has inflicted on ourselves called adolescence, supposedly starting exactly at the first day of age thirteen and continuing through exactly the last day of age seventeen, regardless of each person's varying situation, background, or personality. This holds true in the early time of one's life as well. Most would agree that to differentiate between the day of one's birth, after which one is "alive," and the day before when one was just floating around in a lifeless state would be ridiculous. Doesn't this logic

hold true then from birth back through conception? For instance, many states have laws that define legal abortions as before the end of the third month of fetal development, or within the first trimester. But is the fetus really measurably different between the 90<sup>th</sup> day of development and the 91<sup>st</sup>? Any line drawn is arbitrary and seeks to conceal a hidden agenda.

At this point, let's assume that this logic holds true, an assumption obviously up for debate and which I admit horribly skews the already weak neutrality of this discussion. If then, one cannot define at which point one becomes human, the implications are obvious. These are implications that would seem to be of great importance to Anarchists. What right does one have to take the life of another? Do parents have the right to end their children's lives, at the fetal stage or at age four, etc.? I would hope that many Anarchists agree that the issue of children's liberation is of utmost importance to humanity as a whole, and central to this should be the natural right to life. There are those Anarchists that believe that all individual actions are valid and inviolable, myself being one of them, but enlightened self-interest must be considered. I chose not to put others to death in the expectation that others will afford me the same respect, although I admittedly am prepared to defend myself in the likely chance that this is ignored. I therefore contend that the right to end another human's life, although certainly a natural right and generally possible, is a right that should be intensely questioned in all but the most drastic circumstances.

If it is possible to get more controversial, now is the time in this discourse. I also contend that the fake title of reproductive rights should be dealt a fatal blow, in that a tent of such size makes no sense and is not structurally sound. When the term is uttered, one thinks of the natural rights to decide how, when, where, with whom, and if one should get pregnant.

I would hope that no Anarchist would argue with an individual's right to these considerations. But is the choice to terminate a pregnancy on the same level as these noble choices? At this question, one is often barraged with the basically meaningless "right-to-choose" statement that is such a thoughtless reaction from many radicals. One must ask, the right to choose what? Certainly the defenders of this tired phrase don't mean the right to wear a condom or pull out or use female birth control? Certainly they don't mean the right to just not have sex with someone who one would absolutely not want to have children with, which, despite our understandable desires to transcend biology, is the biological purpose of intercourse?

Does this lack of ability to discuss abortion and its rightful place in the course of human liberation signal a deeper inability of many Anarchists to accept responsibility for their actions? Or does legitimate free will extend to the termination of the lives of one's children? What kind of society would be based on this model?

Let the dogmatic calls of "chauvinist," "male-pig," "fascist," and "heretic" be excluded.

In Solidarity,  
!josh?

Eureka, CA

## Even more anarcho-UFO non-arguments

Dear Jason,

Addressing anarcho-ufologists who write to *Anarchy*, John Connor, editor of *GA*, London, writes in the letters section of *Anarchy* #56, "Response to the Dead," last paragraph; can ETs get from there to here? And "how does this explain the origins of their civilization anyway?"

Sufficient answers to these two most important anarcho-ufological questions have already been submitted by me to *Anarchy* #55, p. 77, bottom of the 4th column beginning with "Class II:" and ending at "Class III:" in the 2nd column of p. 78.

The answer to John's first question is "yes" via "Einsteinian 'time dilation,'" and the





"Time to Prune the Bushes" by Richard Mock (2004).

answer to his second question is:

"A calculation by [Cal Tech's] T.B.H. Kuiper and M. Morris determined that just one technological civilization would populate the entire galaxy in a mere 5 million years." (brackets added)

That is, for 99.99...% of civilizations in the Milky Way galaxy, their states are extra-terrestrial in origin, according to Cal Tech Doctors of Physics Kuiper and Morris!

Moreover, it is not necessary to explain the origins of ET states in order to explain that the origin of the Earthly state is an ET state.

John ended his letter with,

"You [i.e., anarcho-ufologists] have your own forums to propagandize in—here you're only of interest as curiosities of modern folklore. Yours for the destruction of Civilization," (brackets added)

John means well, but he doesn't understand that "curiosities of modern folklore," for example, *mythology*, which is a branch of "modern folklore," played a major role in the cosmic séance formation of the primordial progenitor Earthly state, and is, therefore, a necessary topic for discussion in the *Anarchy* forum! To prove this, I secure the aid of the scholarly words of world renowned cultural anthropologist Elman R.

Service. The primordial progenitor Earthly state is: "materialized" spirit ancestors of the "chiefly line" which "...is usually considered the direct descendant of the ['Great Spirit in the Sky'] founder of the line and of the [clan] society as a whole now exalted in status as a major deity...one of the most powerful of the new politically integrative ingredients [in Polynesian chiefdoms and proto-historic Egyptian tribal chiefdoms] is ideological: the hierarchy of the authority system [i.e., the monotheistic hierarchy (i.e., the chain of command) of 'materialized' spirit ancestors of the 'chiefly line' of the most dominant clan of the chiefdom] has become

supernaturally sanctioned in *mythology*. The original founder [now the Great Spirit of the 'chiefly line'] becomes an ancestor-god, other ancestors are lesser gods, the living chief is nearly divine, lesser chiefs less divine, and the supernatural world and the living world are reflections of each other ('On Earth as it is in Heaven')." (*Origins of the State and Civilization*, pp. 78, 92, brackets and emphasis added)

Further proof is given by Lev Chernyi, former *Anarchy* editor, as cited by David Watson in *Against the Megamachine: Essays on Empire and its Enemies*, p. 168:

"There is evidence that the



concept of the sacred [e.g., ancestor *mythology*] played a major role in the development of...authority...." (brackets added)

Yours, for the destruction of the state. This will ensure the destruction of civilization. Again, John means well, but conversely, however, the destruction of civilization will not ensure the destruction of the state! The following excerpts corroborate this assertion that civilization requires the state and is generated by the state, but not vice versa:

"The city-at-large emanated and diffused from the citadel stronghold which houses the god and the king who are the state. Hence, the city emanates from the state." (Montezuma, "The Stronghold and the Shrine," *Fifth Estate*, Summer 1999)

"The citadel served as the original pilot project for the city...The city as it took form around the royal citadel was a man-made replica of the universe." (Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, 1961)

"The point is that the division of labor, like the production of a surplus, requires the mediation of political power." (Stanley Diamond [mentor of anarcho-primitivist John Zerzan], *In Search of the Primitive* [1974], p. 14.)

"Alienation is political before it is economic; power precedes labor; the economic derives from the political...." (Pierre Clastrés, *Society Against the State* [1987], p. 198)

"...Ritual authority structures play an important part in the organization of production (division of labor) and actively further the coming of domestication...." (John Zerzan, "Running on Emptiness" in *Anarchy*, Spring-Summer, 1997, p. 34)

The Levantian "Eve" Woman and the Bull statuette (flint carved in stone, bone and antler, circa 10,000 B.C.) of Venus of Willendorf (from the "Paleolithic Goddess substratum" from Siberia to Europe, circa 25,000-10,000 B.C.) sitting on a royal throne flanked by "offspring" bulls and "...human figures with their arms raised in the position of supplication,"

was "...a genuinely mystical personality conceived as a supreme being and universal mother goddess crowning a religious system [e.g., 'female monotheism']...the chronological order of these changes [e.g., the Woman and the Bull], a ['revolutionary'] symbolic transformation [shortly] preceding the agricultural economy, is a stratigraphic fact...Neither technological advancement nor ecological nor demographic factors caused the world's first Neolithic Revolution in the Near East...the [sacred] symbol [e.g., the Woman and the Bull] was itself a power capable of generating a more tangible change: the appearance of the farming economy." (Jacques Cauvin, *The Birth of the Gods and the Origins of Agriculture*, Camb. U. Press [2000], pp. 66-71, 123 and Chap. 6, brackets added)

Thus, the primordial progenitor Earthly state, which manifests as the *mythological* monotheistic "authority system" (i.e., the chain of command) of the "materialized" spirit ancestors of the "chiefly line" and of the "materialized" Great Spirit ancestor "founder" of the "chiefly line" of the Old Stone age clan band; is the independent creator and prime mover generator of the sacred symbol, "ritual authority," division of labor, agriculture, civilization and advancing technics; all of which are dependent offsprings of the state.

In his *Passport to the Cosmos: Human Transformation and Alien Encounters* (1999), pp. 158, 159, ufologist Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard University Medical School, Pulitzer Prize Winner and author of the best-selling *Abduction*, John E. Mack, M.D., describes a tribal legend, which was conveyed to him by Bernardo Peixoto, an indigenous shaman anthropologist from Brazil:

"Bernardo was born into the Uru-ê Wau-Wau, a small tribe in the state of Pará in northern Brazil...and their *legend* tells that 'a long time ago'...small glowing beings with large eyes who came from the sky, taught the Uru-ê Wau-Wau how to plant seeds and grow corn... To his people, Bernardo says, 'such

beings represent the Great Spirit taking a physical form..." (emphasis added)

Or perhaps Menes (the first Pharaoh God-King of Egypt, circa 3100 B.C. and symbolized by the Palette of King Narmer, Hierakonpolis, Egypt, circa 3000 B.C. [H.W. Janson, *History of Art*, 1977]) was in actuality the returning earthbound, "time dilated" astronaut, founding father chief and "chief deity" of the "chiefly line" of the most dominant 2000-year-old patrilineal clan (given birth by Menes circa 5100 B.C.) of proto-historic, Egyptian tribal chiefdoms!

And finally, perhaps the referent of the Levantian "Eve" Woman and the Bull statuettes' sacred symbology was in actuality the "time dilated," flesh & blood, Homo sapiens, returning "Earth Mother," "in the sky with diamonds," "Mistress of Animals," huntress matriarch, founding clan Goddess and "chief deity" of the "chiefly line" ("with whom female shamans were closely associated" [Geoffrey Ashe, *Dawn Behind the Dawn*]) of the most dominant 2000-year-old matrilineal clan band (given birth by "Eve," circa 12,000 B.C.) of prehistoric Aswad, Murebet and Jericho, circa 10,000 B.C. And thus, perhaps, "Eve" was the proto-Neolithic matriarch state spearheader of the *fall of man, slavery, domestication & the city sky-gods of Hierakonpolis & Eridu!*

The eloquent Jacques Cauvin (*ibid.*, p. 202) corroborates this assertion that "EVE" (perhaps the wayward Titan daughter of Gaea & Uranus of Greek *mythology*), sitting on a royal throne, flanked by "offspring" bulls and "...human figures with their arms raised in the position of supplication," spearheaded the Neolithic "Revolution":

"The book of *Genesis*, the foundation myth of our civilization, has surprised the writer. There is a homology between the process which recent research suggests for the beginnings of subsistence production and the biblical scenario. On the one hand, we have seen that a psychological-cultural process seems to have anticipated the new mode of exploitation of the

environment. On the other hand, an event that is equally psychological in its essence, the Fall of Man, engenders consequences that one could think recount everything that the study of artistic representations of the Neolithic has suggested to us. Scarcely veiled in the symbolic language, one reads first of a feeling of human finiteness ('nudity') in response to a distancing from the 'divine,' which is now perceived as inaccessible. This brings about the end of a certain easy quest for subsistence in the Garden of Eden, and thus the beginning of labour 'by the sweat of the brow.' This sequence outlines precisely the first beginnings of cultivation (Cain), then of herding (Abel, the younger brother). With all these traits that expressly characterize the Neolithic Revolution, it is difficult not to think that this is what the stories are about. And why should we be surprised, when the book of *Genesis* and the beginnings of farming shared a cradle in the same region of the world?

"*Genesis* was certainly not composed in the Neolithic, but it is known to bring together more ancient texts that were collected around 900 BC in which there must have figured the most ancient memories of those dark ages that the people of the Levant could put into writing." (emphasis added)

According to the aforementioned John E. Mack, Elman R. Service and the former editor of *Anarchy*, Lev Chernyi, as cited above, "there is evidence" that *ancient folklore* "played a major role in the development of" the state! And according to Cauvin, as cited above, it is an historical fact (e.g., *Genesis*) and "a stratigraphic fact" (e.g., the *woman & the bull* statuettes) that *ancient folklore* "played a major role in the development of" the state! And now, as stated by the well meaning John Connor, "here [in the pages of *Anarchy*] you [anarcho-ufologists] are only of interest as curiosities of modern folklore"!!!!?

If John means that the culturally dominant referents of *ancient & modern folklore* are UFOs (i.e., unidentified flying



objects which, by the way, have been scientifically proven to exist), then John would be correct on this account. However, *modern folklore* (e.g., narrational reports given by alleged UFO abductees to U.S. military intelligence officials [Lammer, Mufon #344, pp. 3-8], scientific investigators and billions of TV viewing "nonexperts" alike), contrary to the unimportance to *Anarchy* John gives to it, and in accordance with the overwhelming corroborative evidence here in; is playing "a major role in the development of" the new *disco-ideal-paratech-megastate-religion* of the 21st Century and is, therefore, a necessary topic for discussion in the *Anarchy* forum!

Sincerely,  
David G. Pearson  
15A Jason St. #4A  
Arlington, MA 02476

## Hypocritical tone

Dear *Anarchy*,

Jason McQuinn states he cannot make sense of some of my "extensive rant." Sadly his reply proved my point by its descent into insults and attempts at ridicule. Yes, indeed, the "horror of it all" if you cannot respond to a letter without lowering the tone. "Don't make [you] laugh"? Please. Does labelling another comrade's letter a "rant" suggest a good environment to discuss issues? Hardly. Obviously some kinds of "personal attacks, irrational labelling, irrelevant mudslinging" are more horrendous than others.

Similarly, to suggest that my letter indicates being "afraid of criticism" seems incredulous. If so, I would not bother writing. I did so, partly, to highlight the hypocritical tone of the "anti-Platform" issue with its petty attacks on Platformists (which detracted from any positive points being made) along side the plea for rational debate between anarchists. Debate and critique is essential, it is how it is done which matters. The issue promised one thing and (sadly) delivered another. My other concern was to correct some inaccuracies and to highlight some issues with two of the articles. But, clearly, to do

this equates with producing a "rant" and being afraid of criticism. Silly me. I had failed to realise that critique was a one-way street.

Jason defends labelling other anarchists with "post-left" approved descriptions. Apparently "workerist" simply applies to "would-be radicals who focus almost exclusively on work, workplaces and workers." Assuming that this is all that is meant by this term (which I doubt), Jason fails to indicate why this is a bad thing. Given that the vast majority of the population is working class, it seems strange that a desire to reach these people with libertarian ideas should be worthy of a label? Particularly as being subject to hierarchy for 8 hours plus a day they have a real interest in ending it. So please explain why radicals should fail to "focus almost exclusively" on the vast majority of the population? Particularly as these "would-be" radicals are, in the main, working class. Should they not focus on what directly oppresses them and seek to end it? And if a concern to discuss our ideas with fellow working class people equates to "workerism" then anarchism has always been so.

I would also suggest that saying so-called "workerist" anarchists focus almost exclusively on "work" or the "workplace" is not an accurate reflection of reality. I know few, if any, anarchists who do so. I do know plenty who include workplace struggle in a wider approach which includes community struggle, opposing sexism, racism and homophobia, a concern for cultural issues and a whole lot more. As such, it feels like a straw man argument. Even assuming that they do concentrate on "work" as much as suggested, why is this a bad thing? What happens in work impacts in all aspects of our lives. And most people spend most of their lives in work. It would make sense, therefore, to address the issue and help any struggles which combat hierarchy in it—particularly as capitalism is rooted in the exploitation of labour.

Apparently "organisationalist"

refers to those "who so steadfastly fetishize organisation-building." As opposed to those who so steadfastly fetishise the rejection of organisation-building? And what, exactly, does this mean? It sounds impressive, but beyond an insult I'm not sure it means anything. So organisation-building is a bad thing. Why? Shouldn't anarchists work together? If they do, then an organisation has been built. But, I guess, only building informal, temporary, organisations is appropriate (not that this fetishises a specific form of organisation, of course, only "left" anarchists do that!). But temporary organisations means having to rebuild everything from scratch time and time again. And how long is temporary? *Anarchy* Magazine has been going for decades. When does it stop being temporary? Or is permanent organisation okay when it is a small group? If so, then why does this change if these permanent (small) groups seek to federate with like-minded other groups and share resources and co-ordinate their activities? As for the informal/formal difference, well, I'm not sure why having known, agreed policies and procedures is a bad thing. After all, *Anarchy* magazine has an agreed policy on responding to critical letters. Or am I missing something? Does formal simply mean being a member of a group? If so, then why is that bad?

But, of course, organisations can take on a life of their own and become more than the sum of their parts. Very true. However, I fail to see why this means rejecting organising altogether any more than the fact that camp fires can cause forest fires means rejecting being warm when in the woods. It simply means being aware of the dangers and taking suitable precautions. In the case of anarchist federations, ensuring local autonomy, self-management, federalism and decision-making from the bottom up. I cannot help feeling that for "post-left" anarchists there is only one way of organising, namely their way. If you reject it then you are a "left" anarchist (and not really an anarchist anyway perhaps?).

Then there is "left," that word which is apparently producing such "obvious, genuine differences between real existing anarchists." As far as I can see, the differences are related to the question of whether we should reject "workerist" and "organisationalist" attitudes. If you don't then you are a "left" anarchist. Given Jason's definitions of these terms in his reply, then "post-left" means rejecting addressing the vast majority of the population and what they do the vast majority of their lives and reject working and co-operating with your fellow anarchists in anything but a strictly limited and ad hoc basis (if at all). Surely there is something wrong here? Are "real existing anarchists" really rejecting such basic anarchist ideas as these? I hope not.

I will turn to the one important point in his reply. This is my criticism of his review of *North-Eastern Anarchist*. He "stands by [his] very, very brief comments" and criticises me for making "completely unsupported" comments. I failed to do so before because I did not want to make my "extensive rant" longer than it was and, moreover, because anyone familiar with the articles in question would see I was correct. I will provide my summary with some evidence for those who have not read the articles.

Jason states that Brian Sheppard's article implies "if only there were some anarchist leaders in the AFL-CIO and Teamsters they'd be revolutionary." Only if you quote out of context. Brian argued that the "problem with 'organized' labor ... is precisely how it is organized," namely "in a very undemocratic and disempowering way." As such, to suggest Brian considered the sole problem as "its leadership" is a distortion. Particularly as he says "what is needed, then, is this: the classical ideas and spirit of anarchism infused into the labor movement." It is clear from this that Brian is arguing for a radical transformation of how unions operate and not about changing who makes up the leadership.

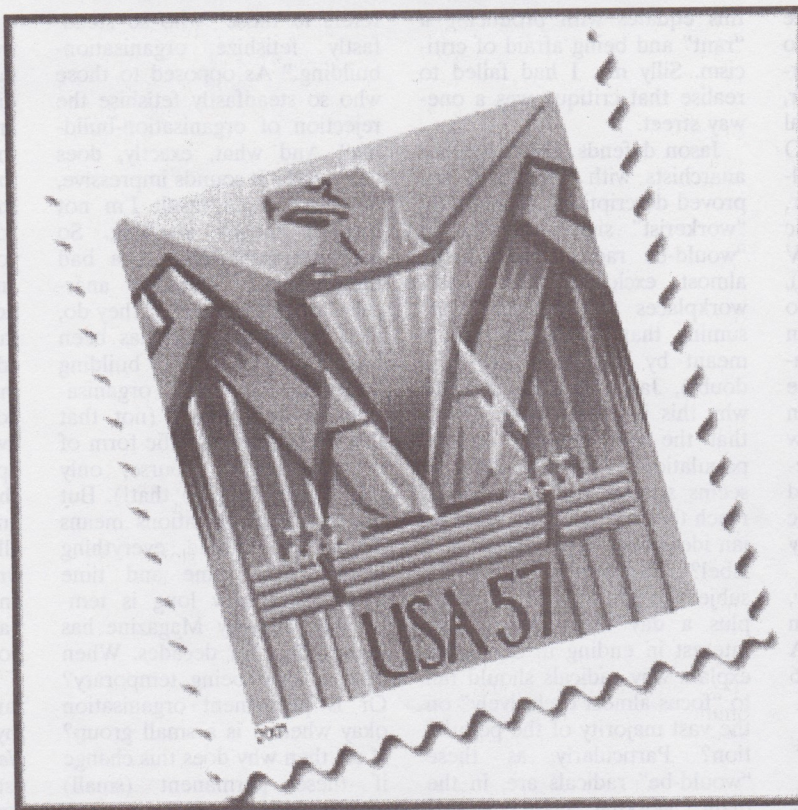
Jason claims that Aileen O'Carroll's article "ignore[d]



the effects of authoritarian ideology and organisation" on the Bolsheviks. This seems incredulous as the whole article discussed that. By quoting her out of context, Jason turns an article on the limitations of Bolshevik ideology into its opposite. When Aileen notes that "the Bolsheviks could have followed a more democratic route, but they chose not to" she was specifically discussing modern-day Leninist rationales for the Bolsheviks' authoritarian practice. The rest of the essay shows why these rationales are wrong as Bolshevik ideology played its part. For example, she states that "the Leninist idea of socialism has more to do with the nationalisation of industry or State Capitalism than the creation of a society in which workers have control over their own labour power." She argues that "Leninists believe it is the job of the party to exercise control of society on behalf of the ruling class and like a parent, the party interprets what the best interests of the working class are." She clearly notes that "with or without the civil war their strategic decisions would have been the same, because they arise out of the Leninist conception of what socialism is and what workers control means. Their understanding of what socialism means is very different from the anarchist definition." Moreover, "our argument is that no matter what the objective factors were or will be, the Bolshevik route always and inevitably leads to the death of the revolution."

I could go on, but I have made my point. Is Jason's summary of Aileen's article reflective of what she actually argued? I can only assume a (irrational?) dislike for "leftist" anarchism made him fail to see the bloody obvious.

Moving on from Jason's somewhat pointless reply, I turn to the "reader response." I had to laugh at my anonymous critic when she/he defended Bob Black's appropriation of Lenin's arguments from "What is to be



American postal fascism?

done?" Apparently Black was merely "emphasising the original contributions of Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, . . . and that anarchist theory did not simply arise spontaneously from the class struggle." And there I was thinking that Black was attacking the *Platform* for arguing exactly this when, in fact, he was agreeing with it! Silly me. And what of Black's "post-leftism" embracing a key concept from leftism in one of its most authoritarian forms? Not a word. Perhaps that explains the attempt to put words in Black's typewriter?

But, then again, Black does get off easy from our critic, who fails to mention Black's errors in his article. The best that they can come up with is that Black is addressing the "compulsory" nature of the *Platform*—by quoting something not actually in the *Platform*! I corrected this inaccurate assertion about the *Platform* and provided the real source as well as an alternative translation. I also corrected the suggestion that the WSM edited their version of the *Platform* to exclude the quote in question. It appears that casting false

assertions on the honesty of your comrades is fair game in "rational" debate and not worthy of comment.

I also find it significant that our anonymous comrade considers it unworthy of mention to ponder the relevance of Black's review in the first place. After all, I know of no anarchist group which applies the *Platform* as it was written. Black is, therefore, simply repeating criticisms which were relevant in the 1920s (criticisms made at the time, much of which I agree with). It reminds me of when Leninists (real "leftists") talk about Bakunin's secret organisations when arguing against modern anarchism. They fail to note that no-one has actually organised in that way since the 1870s, yet consider it essential that they highlight its limitations! Black's review of the *Platform* is a simply a similar exercise in ideology passing as theory. Yes, many anarchist groups call themselves Platformist but by that they mean they are inspired by aspects of the *Platform* while rejecting other parts of it. Just as anarchists are inspired by some aspects of

Bakunin's ideas while rejecting other parts. Why concentrate on the parts that are rejected?

Then there is the question of the *Platform*'s call for a "common command" for a revolutionary army. Apparently Black was merely channelling the spirits of long dead anarchists when he talked about the counter-revolutionary "People's Army" and the CNT militias and can take no responsibility for his words. Shame, then, that these "Russian anarchists" could not have used the Spanish example as they were writing ten years before the outbreak of the Spanish revolution. I should also note that the CNT militias also argued for a co-ordination of all fronts, seeing it as essential to defeat Franco. They wanted this co-ordination to come from below, via elected war committees. As practised by the Makhnovists, who were used as an example of what was meant in the *Platform* incidentally.

Our comrade states that Black's mention of Makhno's drinking and Arshinov's return to the USSR was "insignificant" in terms of his "overall critique." Then why mention them at all then? Why should Makhno's drinking be even considered worthy of note unless you seek to trivialise the ideas you are attempting to refute. Similarly, our comrade (like Black) does not explain how Arshinov's return to Russia signifies more about the *Platform* than Makhno's and Mett's continued opposition to the regime. As such, it is simply a case of guilt by association and unworthy of rational debate. I do, however, find this ironic, as "post-left" anarchists denounced Bookchin for doing exactly the same thing as regards individualist anarchists and fascism (and, even more ironically, a book review in this *Anarchy* makes the same point). Apparently individualist anarchists becoming fascists says nothing, but one of the five authors of the *Platform* returning to Russia is deeply significant!



Moving onto the “dual power” question (an expression I don’t particularly like, incidentally, as I thought I had indicated in my letter). Apparently forming such “armed revolutionary organisations” as “soviets, factory committees, and peasant committees” and other organs of popular self-management cannot be “viewed as anything other than a proto-State.” So when I talk about people managing their own affairs directly, I (in fact) meant “management by elected delegates and specialists, operating within whatever bureaucratic structure was put in place.” But where does that leave anarchism? My arguments are simply repeating the ideas of Bakunin, Kropotkin, Goldman, Berkman, Malatesta and a host of other anarchist thinkers. Ideas I think are still relevant. So my “ideological agenda” appears to be simply promoting anarchist ideas.

So where does this rejection of key ideas of revolutionary anarchism led us? Well, apparently no factory committees to organise production. That means any workers’ militias fighting to defend the revolution will not get weapons and ammunition. Not that such militias would exist. Organising self-managed militias and federating them into war committees would mean creating a “centralised, regular army” and so that’s out too. Far better to have the militia groups not co-ordinating their defence of the revolution! As for soviets, well, obviously Kropotkin (and Malatesta, Goldman, Makhno, et al) were simply wrong to see anything positive in them. Bloody leftists, not knowing what anarchism really stands for!

So I do find his/her dismissal of self-managed struggle and organisation as a “proto-state” incredible. As such, when he/she concludes by stating that they hoped anarchists will “embrace a truly anarchist approach to confronting all forms of power” I really have to wonder what this “truly anarchist approach” is. Reading Murray Bookchin’s “Listen, Marxist!” is recommended as “a good start.” Having read it numerous times, I

have to wonder why it is recommended as it follows my basic argument, not his/hers. As well as arguing for “an organisation of affinity groups” it states that anarchists “seek to persuade the factory committees, assemblies or soviets to make themselves into genuine organs of popular self-management.” But all this, we are assured by our anonymous comrade, is a “proto-State” and the “organisationalist agenda” is, in fact, “the most pernicious Leftist influence in the contemporary anarchist movement”!

So, yes, I would wholeheartedly recommend reading “Listen, Marxist!” It shows how much far some “post-left” anarchists are from a “truly anarchist approach” to the problems of revolutionary change.

What is significant is that a “post-left” anarchist should recommend a book which attacked Marxist attitudes prevalent 35 years ago as being relevant to the current debate within anarchist circles today. Does that mean today’s “organisationalist” and “workerist” anarchists simply parrot the ideas of Marxist-Leninists in the 1960s? Of course not. But it seems sad that “post-left” anarchists think they do. And it does point to the ideological nature of much of the “post-leftist” critique of anarchism. Rather than critique what anarchists are doing now, we are just subjected to reviews of an 80 year-old document (which is not even being applied in its pure form) and recommendations to read an excellent (“organisationalist”?) anarchist essay directed to non-anarchists in the 1960s. Hardly convincing.

Ultimately, the replies to my letter just confirm my worse fears about “post-left” anarchism. At its best, it simply repeats basic libertarian ideas and is so redundant. At its worse, it simply allows some comrades to feel smug and insult others while systematically attacking the core ideas of anarchism. Ideas other anarchists still see as valid simply because the “post-left” anarchists suggest nothing to replace them with.

Tell you what. Someone please explain how “post-left”

anarchists see a revolution developing without federations of factory committees, neighbourhood assemblies and militia columns as well as all the other popular organisations anarchists like Bakunin and Kropotkin advocated and are dismissed by some as a “proto-state.” Does “post-left” anarchism have any concrete suggestions, however vague, on how to solve the problems every revolution has faced? Enlighten me about how a revolution will defend and organise itself without embracing the ideas advocated by these anarchist thinkers? It should make interesting reading to see how “post-leftists” avoid the “false ideas and sloppy thinking” derived from such anarchists as Bakunin, Kropotkin and Malatesta on this and other important issues!

Obviously I have not addressed every issue raised in the two replies. This letter is already long enough (I would not want to be accused of producing another “extensive rant”) so I will leave it there. I look forward to the “scathing” replies which will, as seems all too common, ignore the important issues raised while spreading the insults liberally.

yours,  
Iain McKay  
cllv13@yahoo.com

## Jason responds: More nonsense

At the risk of further boring readers by prolonging this exchange, I’ll respond to a few points directly addressed to—or at—me as quickly as possible.

(1) Iain still seems completely clueless regarding the differences between rational criticism and contemptuous denunciation of the various tendencies within the anarchist milieu. I strongly encourage the first and deplore the latter. (Although I will also repeat that would-be demagogues—Murray Bookchin remains the best example—who continually resort to smears and appeals to prejudices fully deserve to be ridiculed whenever possible.) Readers should also be cautioned that not all contributors to this magazine will ever agree with all my views in this regard.

(2) Iain, further, can’t seem to figure out that expressing contempt for particular ideas—like the semi-Bolshevik compromises in the *Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*—is not the same as expressing contempt for particular anarchists—like self-identified platformists, for example. Anarchists are always quite right to express contempt for authoritarian, hierarchical, manipulative or exploitative ideas and practices. However, I argue that it makes no sense for anarchists to denounce anarchist comrades just because they adopt a few such confused ideas and practices. Far better to communicate our concerns while respecting those who have a few different perspectives but who share our most basic concerns and critiques.

(3) If you wish, as Iain has now done twice, to write an insulting, ridiculous letter to this magazine, we’ll print it, but the author ought to expect that there may be an insult or two in response! Hint: write a friendly, concerned and respectful letter instead and you can certainly expect a friendly, concerned and respectful response!

(4) If you don’t want your letter to be called a “rant” then don’t go on and on and on in a tirade, making wild accusations one after another! It’s certainly disingenuous to complain when a rant is called a “rant”!

(5) I labelled my response to Iain’s original letter “Afraid of criticism?” because it seems to me that Iain’s goal is to avoid rational critique of positions he or his friends hold by portraying any such criticisms as being in some way out-of-bounds. They’re not.

(6) No, Iain, “workerist” doesn’t mean all the nonsensical things you claim it does, except maybe in your own mind.

(7) Ditto for the word “organizationalist.” For one example, Iain says he “fail[s] to see why [organizations taking on a life of their own] means rejecting organising altogether any more than the fact that camp fires can cause forest fires means rejecting being warm when in the woods.” Well, Iain, nobody that I know of has rejecting “organizing altogether,” so stop pretending that I have and try dealing with real disagreements for



a change, not those in your fevered imagination!

(8) I invite anyone interested to actually read Brian Sheppard's article in the *Northeastern Anarchist*, from which I quoted (in the zine review Iain dislikes so much) Sheppard's contention that: "The problem with American organized labor is its leadership." If Sheppard meant something else, it's not my fault, Iain, that he said this instead!

(9) Regarding the same review of the issue of *Northeastern Anarchist* that has Iain so riled up, he complains: "Is Jason's summary of Aileen's article reflective of what she actually argued?" However, you wouldn't have any idea from Iain's letter about this at all, since he nowhere repeats my actual article summary. In reality I said it was an "account of the Bolshevik destruction of the Russian Revolution." Even Iain apparently agrees with me on this! Incredibly, what got Iain so upset was a *parenthetical criticism* (in the zine review) of O'Carroll's concluding words (which followed the article summary in the review), but you'd never know from Iain's crazy account!

(10) Iain, if you want to be taken seriously by other anarchists, then I suggest putting a little (or a lot) more effort into attempting to understand what is at stake in disagreements and make rational arguments about the actual areas of disagreement, rather than making a lot of noise and polluting the atmosphere so much that nothing but nonsense remains.

## Where are the women?

Dear readers of/editor and contributors to *Anarchy*,

The issue at hand has been bothering me for a while and considering the day (8 March), I'd like to bring it to your attention: Where are the women within these pages?

I've read a few issues of *Anarchy* now, and I find it disconcerting that both within the letters section and among the articles there are close to no female writers. How can this be? It seems to me that most typical leftist anarchist magazines have a much more gender-balanced readership and authorship. (An example would be the Swedish anarchist magazine *Brand*, where the female

contributors probably outnumber the males!

At least that's the impression I've got from the issues I've read.) Could it be that the anti-patriarchal, anti-civilization theories that have inspired me so much, are contradicting the wants of women?

For me civilization = patriarchy. If we are ever to see its final destruction we need strong women on our side. The anti-leftist anarchist milieu seems at this point a bit too much like a boys club. What can be done?

Anti-sexist  
revolutionary greetings,  
K.  
fukkinyippie@yahoo.no

## Jason comments: No clubs here

I consider worries about appearances to be a typical symptom of the leftist preference for superficial, symbolic politics over authentically lived, radical practice. In my opinion, politically-correct numbers games (whether involving gender, race, class or other essentialist marks of identity) should be left to those uninterested in more important pursuits. What counts most is the genuine desire to destroy all forms of exploitation and domination experienced by every person, and the willingness to join with people to subvert capital and state regardless of identity markers.

If women want to participate in any particular magazine they will. If not, they won't. Their level of participation certainly doesn't have anything to do with sexism or patriarchy in this case! In my experience it usually has much more to do with their particular desires, abilities, situations and preferences. Various women have been involved in the writing, editing and production of this magazine at various times (not always identifiably due to use of pseudonyms), and will continue to be involved to the extent they wish. Same with men (or "girls" and "boys," if you wish). Completely by chance every author listed on the cover of the last issue (published just before your letter was written) was female.

And, by the way, the readership of *Anarchy* magazine is in all likelihood as diverse as that of any left anarchist rag—it's just that more people in total generally read *An-*

*archy* than any of the more left-anarchist periodicals for some reason. I wonder why?

## Breaking & entering stories?

Hello friends,

We are working on a book titled *Breaking and Entering: State Repression of Autonomous Zones*. The book is a compilation of first hand accounts of raids, surveillance, and other forms of control upon our temporary and permanent autonomous zones (convergence centers, infoshops, campsites, etc.). The accounts will be supplemented with essays and analysis regarding State repression by high-profile and low-profile intellectuals/activists. We are currently working to get the word out for contributions. If you would like more information about this project or contribution guidelines, please get in touch.

Breaking and Entering  
300 S. Broadway  
Pendleton, IN 46064  
breakandenterbook  
@hotmail.com

## Inaccurate statement

Burt Green's Counterreply to Jason:

1) It is irrelevant whether the subject matter of your essay was "the anti-anarchist rhetoric of leftism" or "the feeding habits of Bufo Marinus"; when one makes the statement (and I quote the offending sentence here in full): "With the passing of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky rescued Marxism from the impending oblivion delivered by the successful institutionalization of European social democracy," one is still accountable for the accuracy of the statement in itself, quite regardless of the title of the article or context in which it is present. It must be able to stand factually on its own. As such, I am obliged to continue to regard your statement as inaccurate. Moreover, it is evident that the omission of left communists and council communists from your description of "Marxism" is what allows you to go on to construct a generalization about

its purported "rescue" by elements that more than any other have undermined its legitimacy as authentic revolutionary theory—a generalization that would otherwise have been indefensible and in need of qualification and which in turn would have served your rhetorical needs less effectively. I therefore stand by my assertion that between your characterization of Marxism (to which I would add the even more recent and egregious assessment by Allan Antliff of what he thinks council communism is—an opinion that makes Socialism ou Barbarie into "Marxists") and Kevin's of anarchism, there is a symmetry of factual omission, poor scholarship and sloppy analysis. My purpose in writing was firstly to increase the quality of the debate, as I believe this to be of mutual benefit irrespective of "side."

2) I am not a council communist. Fetishization of any specific organizational form is an error. It is the anti-hierarchical and anti-capitalist, or if you will, the libertarian and communist content of whatever forms of social organization that are created through social struggle that determines their revolutionary character, not the forms themselves alone. Nor am I a Marxist, an Anarchist or a Situationist. I have no allegiance to any ideology. I have not to my knowledge, misrepresented historical anarchism, the revolutionary current that came to its greatest realization in Spain 1936-1937, with any of my statements, beyond what would normally be the case in such generalizations. If I have blundered, I would appreciate knowing of the specific instances in which my (over)generalizations do not apply.

3) The conference, or at least its plenary, has in fact now already happened, and most of those who participated in it regard it as having been to some degree a success. There are, furthermore, reasons to believe its immediate successors will be productive as well. It would appear that you have not so much shot yourself in the foot with your predictions of other peoples' behavior in this





"Bush Going to Meet Jesus" by Richard Mock (2002).

regard, you seem rather to have blown off an entire limb.

4) Overall, you are being rather excessively thin-skinned. I had been told initially by one of your colleagues that you had been overburdened with responsibilities and were crowding a deadline and that that was the reason for your over-hasty generalization. I'm afraid I'm more sympathetic to that line of exculpation than to the self-inflicted wounds of your recently published reply, and in any event, even such an explanation hardly gets Mr. Antliff off the hook. Notwithstanding these objections, I really do value the tireless work you and your collaborators have done to keep

*AAJODA* afloat.

So let me put my money where my inkstains are and have a two-year subscription, please, even as we disagree. Check enclosed to cover the forthcoming Gombin and Seidman books as well—\$50.00.

Yours,  
Burt Green

*Jason responds:*  
**Quite incredible!**

Wow! That's a lot of "factual omission, poor scholarship and sloppy analysis" for one sentence! Especially for a sentence that most people wouldn't have any problem with in a quick overview! Apparently, you're rather touchy about any

imagined slighting of the vast importance of council communist/left communist tendencies in the history of Marxism. I promise you, though, that if council communists and left communists had actually been more than a few footnotes in Marxist history compared with Social Democracy, Marxism-Leninism and the succeeding variants (Trotskyism, Stalinism, Maoism, etc.) I would have made more of a point to mention them.

However, given the realities of the actual history lived by billions of people in the last hundred or so years, along with the tiny space I devoted to my last-minute description of the relation of Marxists and anarchists, this becomes no more

than a trivial omission. It certainly doesn't deserve the importance you accord it.

I find your eagerness to classify my entire essay on "The anti-anarchist rhetoric of Marxism" as "ideological" because of this one sentence quite incredible! With a standard like this (one sentence per essay interpretable, however obtusely, as "inaccurate" making the entire essay "ideological") my guess is that there has never been anything ever written that could pass your idiosyncratic judgement in this regard.

I'm happy to hear that you're not interested in fetishizing any particular organizational form, however. And that you don't "have any



allegiance to" any ideology. At least we're in agreement on those points.

And I'm also quite happy to see that the conference worked out well. That means that participants refrained for a change from mucking things up by doing as I advised! Rather than "shooting" anyone, I would interpret that as my good advice (for once!) being followed, since the only "prediction" I made was predicated on it not being followed!

## Conscientiousness proofreading

In an editorial, Jason McQuinn wrote: "Above all, read any texts you want to criticize with extreme care. Avoid superficial readings and always make a conscientiousness effort to understand what is at stake."

Maybe it's a typo, but this one's too funny and ironic to let it go by without comment.

Then again, no further comment is necessary. :-)

Mitchell Halberstadt  
mitch-h@sbcglobal.net

## More & more questions

*Anarchy Magazine,*

I am indebted for the space allotted for my letter ("Marxism and Critical Theory?" in issue #57), and even though the responses were enlightening, they opened up a series of additional questions that only became clear to me after pondering your ideas a bit. My questions and ideas are concerned with the theoretical lineage of anarchism and the possibility for a post-left anarchism.

I will start with this: does Marxism not become, in the end, after socialism and the state has withered, anarchism? Is Marxism not a process that purports to lead to anarchism? And is anarchism not the study of a destination, the mechanics and system of social and individual organization, but what it lacks is the theory of process of how to transform society into anarchism? Is not this lack of process, of revolutionary transformative theory, the reason that anarchism will for some time to come, until another theory surfaces, be haunted

by Marxism?

To abandon Marxism is to abandon the only theory for revolution: the seizure of the means of production by the lower classes, inflamed to revolt by the economic stratification which results from the inherent inequality which is the very heart of capitalism. It has worked in the past, but with horrid results.

First, let me address some of the responses I received from your magazine. Lawrence makes an interesting point concerning dialectics. Obviously none of the philosophical categories I presented were hermetically isolated, and they all exist in relation to others that preceded them (humanism/religion; enlightenment/superstition; post-modernism/enlightenment) but what does he mean by this, that because they were a response to something, perhaps anathema to our modern inclinations, that they should be abandoned now? Dialectically, I think that many of the categories I listed are the genealogical precursors that inevitably will (hopefully) lead to anarchism. I will explain. Both of you wrote that you are not humanists because you are not moralists. Defined in the *Random House Dictionary*, a moralist is someone who "believed in regulating the morals in others." A moral is defined as "of or concerned with principals of right or wrong conduct; being in accord with such principals." In your article, Jason, "Post Left Anarchy," you write that, generally, anarchists believe that "the autonomous individual is the fundamental basis of all genuinely anarchistic theories of organization;" "freedom of initiative is likewise fundamental for both groups and individuals." These are fundamental principals, necessary elements that must be present in order for an anarchism to exist. Freedom of initiative would be right conduct, whereas slavery, fascism, totalitarianism forced upon others would be incorrect conduct, conduct that would threaten the very fabric of an anarchist system; an anarchist would live "in accord with these principals." Wouldn't an anarchist

society try to squash a new Stalinism from forming within its midst, thus living by a set of principals, regulating the morals of others? Wouldn't freedom and egalitarianism be principles that we would try to regulate, to make sure were not dissolved in place of hierarchical corporations and such. Are we not then, moralists? I think perhaps, speculatively of course, that what you both object to in the term moralist is idea of perpetuating the present ideology, of just about any ideology that has existed since the advent of civilization. But if we lived in an anarchism, would our belief in its principals be wrong? Can we not live in our current sociopolitical system and believe in the principals of our own ideological concepts? It's not so bad being a moralist, just as long we're not moralists that live by prevailing status quo principles.

According to the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, the Enlightenment's founding fathers, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Bentham, Hume, Lessing, Kant, Franklin, Jefferson, "while not always agreeing, nevertheless formed a family united in support of such values as freedom, equality, tolerance, and secularism." They also "believed in the perfectibility of human nature, the moral sense and responsibility, and the possibility of progress." These issues, and the philosophical systems of the enlightenment, are, as in any given epoch, tainted by the imperfections of the intellectual shortcomings of the given period, but, the enlightenment, as a reaction against superstition, was key to developing scientific systems that would prove invaluable in our stepping out of ignorance. Is scientific method at fault for the colossal shortcomings currently affecting our world, I would venture to say no, it's the fact that it has been tainted by patriarchy, and capitalistic blinders. Do anarchists, as opposed to postmodernists, believe in progress? I think so. An anarchist society would be a real step forward, a progressive step into a better world. Is progress linear? Perhaps, and this can only be proven by

whether or not we ever achieve an anarchism, and what sparks this revolution; more on this later. Even if progress is suspect, the enlightenment belief in freedom, equality, secularism, moral (principles) would not be. The advent of an anarchist system would be the very definition of progress: the elimination of hierarchy, state, capitalism, and private property, thus transforming moral sense and social/individual principals. The idea of progress is intertwined with Enlightenment thought, at least that which (again, *Cambridge Dictionary* definition of Enlightenment thought) 1) human beings are free to the extent that their actions are carried out for a reason. Actions prompted by traditional authority, whether religious or political, are therefore not free; liberation requires weakening, if not also overthrow of this authority. 2) human rationality is universal, requiring only education for its development. In virtue of their common rationality, all human beings have certain rights, among them the right to choose and shape their individual destinies. 3) belief that in human rationality the true forms of things could be discovered. One could quibble with this last one, but what are anarchists trying to do if not pierce the social unconscious, or false consciousness, and to shatter ideological/hegemonic "endless webs of entangled deceit" (Chomsky) into the realm of true possibility? One could say that technological/consumer society has nothing to do with enlightenment rationality, but with the irrationality of market ideology (the reification of value).

In regards to Romanticism (the child of the Enlightenment), Samuel Johnson defined it as "a focus for hopes of revolution and social change in the future"; Friedrich Von Schlegel also defined it as "the free expression of imagination and association." Romanticism, and its fixations—individuality, simplicity, aesthetics, hedonism—were a response to the extremes of the Enlightenment project (its scientism as Lawrence put it). According to the Encyclope-



*dia Britannica*, Romanticism "emphasized the individual, the subjective, the irrational, the imaginative, the personal, the spontaneous, the emotional, and the visionary," also a "deepened appreciation of the beauties of nature." The similarities to many of the ideals of Anarchism are striking. But again, Romanticism was marked by it flaws, as is any system which is a reaction to another flawed system. However, not since the birth of civilization, not since the advent of agriculture, and possibly before, has there been such a movement which threatens to transform society so utterly as that which began with the Enlightenment. Not since agriculture wrought civilization from the arms of nature, not since the long plummet into superstition and hierarchy, patriarchy and domination has there been such a trend. What is this new movement that began with the Enlightenment possibility dialectically building towards? What is at the core of all these systems, at its cores? Anarchism.

I see a clear delineation and connection between Enlightenment and Romanticism and Humanism; as well as with Marxism and Anarchism. Even in existentialism, which is rejected for being humanistic by Lawrence, I find anarchism, or the dialectical struggle toward it. In existentialism, there is the belief that there is no essential human nature. Sartre calls it "existence before essence," a rub from the Enlightenment thinks Locke and Hume. Therefore, morality can be freely chosen or rejected and, unless you're a chaos anarchist (road warrior style with no principles at all), then we are under no biological or spiritual obligation to not abide by anarchist principals. Freedom of choice only comes when individual autonomy (anarchist ideal) is discovered as a true possibility. To my way of thinking, Existentialism is the next step from Humanism—but without its essence. Postmodernism/Post-structuralism, which is a strong reaction to both existentialism and the Enlightenment asserts no foundation, no essence, no rationality, no free will, no pos-

sibility of seeing through ideology, no centered subject, no exit, no progress, no signified, no grand narratives, no progress. The postmodern/anarchist connection is its similar critique of power; power that is multifaceted, that does not simply emanate from once source (Marxism's production), power that is exerted upon people from even seemingly benign institutions and sources, power that, perhaps, can only be conquered by anarchism. There are other anarchist/pomo connections: multi as opposed to mono, horizontal as opposed to vertical, the decentered subject, and the questioning of grand narratives, such as the idea of progress and Marxism as well. Pomo made clear (to anyone who wasn't already steeped in anarchist lore) the extent to which power pervades our lives and the extent needed to go in order to combat it—reform is not enough, neither will the elimination of a few of the leviathans largest tentacles.

What I am getting at is this— if ones takes all of these theoretical systems and eliminates the negative historical contingents, then fit them together like a puzzle, then we would have, from the Enlightenment forward, a dialectical movement toward anarchism. It is as if anarchism is the marrow of all advanced formed of thought, not to mention primitivistic social formation. After living in more or less anarchist social structures for 99.9% of our history, we took a horrific detour into hierarchy, state, capital, religion, patriarchy, and we are now slowly returning to this state, intellectually. Hegel wrote that freedom can only be possibly when social organization coincides with ideology. Since philosophically we are moving toward the realization of anarchism in academia, the question is, when is actual social organization going to begin moving in this direction? The center cannot hold.

The object would be to try and theorize anarchism outside the ideologically distorting historical contingents (parameters/constraints/limitations) of our current era, while at the same

time adapting it to current sociopolitical events—in other words, to quit running up from behind, to perhaps even get out of the middle, and start leading the way. The intellectual movements, stripped of their zeitgeist, reveal their true natures. Marxism, stripped of its process, is anarchism. Enlightenment stripped of its scientism is anarchism, humanism stripped of its essentialism is anarchism, pomo stripped of its nihilism is anarchism; on the other hand, capitalism stripped of its ideology is fascism, the state stripped of its rhetoric is fascism, religion stripped is fascism. If, in essence, there is only either a move toward fascism or anarchism, assuming humanity will not just find a happy medium in between (which seems unlikely—there is no stasis), but that it must move toward either pole, the question is, where are we really going? Science fiction, the supposed avatar of futurity, has been dismal in its predictions (but done wonderfully at blowing topical issues into critically enlightening proportions). Is our current intellectual evolution toward anarchism, these ideas which contain anarchism, are they the result of oppression/repression and, if so, how far does oppression/repression go before response turns into revolution? As oppression/repression become more obvious and overt in the lives of white middle class males, will not the will to freedom grow as well (since WMM are currently maintaining the status quo in this country—we need not tell minorities, women, or gays about the existence of oppression/repression).

How will an anarchist revolution be triggered? There are two ways 1) by a universal and inevitable response to growing oppression/repression, which is certain to increase, by the more or less majority participation of the people, or 2) a revolution forced upon the people who are not aware that they want it, maybe aren't ready to fight for it, or are happy as oppressors. In the first case, a sort of inevitable reaction to insane social stratification and oppression/repression, there isn't much to it:

just wait, and wait, and wait, all the while planning what an anarchist society may look like and how to organize it when it comes, and try not to sound like utopians or end-of-daysers to the uninitiated. Christians and Muslims and Zoroastrians and anyone else who believes in heaven or hell, or the end of days should not be too hard to convert when the time comes by the natural method. Religion is, after all, the bastard of freedom's lack, and a comical (though often homicidal) alienated sublimation of the desire for a federated, decentralized network of free associations employing economic, as well as social institutions—an egalitarian free society; the futile alienated attempt to create this world, but, unfortunately, in an imaginary ideal spiritual realm instead of the material world (and often enough these religious systems are tainted by, and perpetuate the current ills of the paternalistic society).

Why wouldn't we perhaps just flow right into the worst kind of fascism and stay there? Why must we move toward anarchism? Well, perhaps we will end up subjected to the worst kind of totalitarianism for the duration of our stay on the planet, but my feeling is that we will move toward anarchism. Why? Because that is what we had for 99.9% of our existence on this planet, and my feeling is that it will not be long before we return (well, not long in the sense of humanity's existence, but probably not in my lifetime). It will be an anarchism transformed of course, one inundated with rationality and tools, but an anarchism nonetheless. Once we reach this anarchist stage, we will unrepress all our sublimated desires, this suicidal material growth should cease, and have, perhaps, a post scarcity world (post scarcity in the sense of the essentials to live—shelter, clothes, food, education, healing, etc). If this type of revolution occurs—I imagine it would be somewhat like the social transformation that occurred as a result of the Enlightenment; all the inexorable, unstoppable changes that occurred—not violently and



suddenly, but like an event horizon had been passed—no turning back.

But perhaps I'm totally wrong, and the only way we will have anarchism is by making it happen. Since anarchism is a destination, and has no revolutionary process, we will for some time, until another revolutionary process is designed, be haunted by the specter of Marxism/Leninism/Maoism. The question is, can one struggle to smash and defeat an opposing ideological system (forcing some people into this new system without their willing consent) without creating a new authoritarianism? Is nonconsensual revolution (say, the seizure, then destruction of political authority and the means of production by an intellectual cadre party without popular support) totally antithetical to anarchist ideals?

Depending on which version of revolution one subscribes to 1) inevitable revolution—waiting for inherent contradictions to result in such stratification/repression/oppression that the general populace is inflamed into revolutionary action, or 2) the seizure of power by a small cadre party—they are both haunted by Marxism. Perhaps there are some who don't feel it can ever happen, they just like thinking about it; but for those others, what workable means is there besides the seizure of the means of production? If Marxism is the process, and anarchism the destination, how are we to abandon the process without abandoning the project? Marxism/Leninism/Maoism is the most successful system for creating revolution that currently exists (though not on the scale and not with the results needed for an anarchism) and sure, we can simply create countercultural communes and the such, hoping that the times catch up with it, but until a new form of revolutionary system is created, we will be in the shadow of Marxism, and Hegel's dialectic, always. If we are to create a post Marxist anarchism, then we need to stop thinking about the destination and start thinking about the process. And if there

has been processes theorized, who are the authors and what have they written? This is what we should concern ourselves with in *Anarchy* magazine and perhaps this would make a post-left anarchism more understandable and palpable to readers.

Dr. Brian Oblivion  
and the Troubadours of Funk  
[lovewarpstain@att.net](mailto:lovewarpstain@att.net)

## Lawrence responds:

If you insist on positing Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as "the most successful system for creating revolution" then we have little to discuss. Aside from this being an ideological assertion, such a statement begs the question of how revolution is understood from an anarchist perspective, and what a successful anarchist revolution would achieve. If by "successful" you mean the extension and consolidation of an economic regime based on wage labor, the coercive expansion of industrial capitalism controlled by a bureaucratic state run by a self-selected elitist political party with a huge political police apparatus, then you are too far away from just about all points of overlapping interest with anarchists, let alone any kind of possible agreement. All the preceding comments you raise in your letter are based on your misunderstanding of anarchist goals, visions, projects, and history. Giving you the benefit of the doubt only happens once.

## Child advocate

Dear *Anarchy*,

I relished "It's about time: Schooling as Oppression"! It was so intensely inspiring to the passion that I have to bring down the institution of traditional schooling that I could barely tolerate reading it—even as I devoured each sentence! I strongly feel, as a fierce child advocate, that compulsory schooling is gross human rights abuse and the antithesis to the democracy that the USA claims to represent. Every aspect of traditional schooling is oppressive and in violation of basic human rights and freedom, especially in four main areas:

1. Physiological deprivation:

Children's toilet needs are restricted, rationed or denied in school, placing children at risk for urinary and digestive disorders, anxiety and sexual fetishes; Children can only eat at the brief prescribed times; Time for physical, outdoor activity has been hacked down to 10 minutes, once per day, or to none at all in some schools.

2. Mind, thought and emotion control: School teachers love children who are obedient, passive recipients of their force-feedings. Spirited children who buck the system are first punished into compliance, but then are referred for testing to earn a label of "learning disabled" or "behaviorally disordered" if punishment fails to shackle the child. Chemical control (*i.e.*: stimulant medication) is then prescribed to keep the bored, passionate or dissenting child under control.

3. Eradication of free time and intrusion into the home: School is a prison for the crime of being a child. The school day swallows up six hours per day, 30 hours per week, of a child's precious life. Add more hours to that total for extra-curricular school activities, detentions and school sports. Sacrifice another eight or ten hours per week for the Big Brother device called "homework" that further intrudes on a child's time with family, friends and for solitude and exploration. Children often cannot count on their own parents to be their advocates in situations of injustice, as teachers are viewed with god-like respect, expertise and infallibility.

4. Dissent and liberation are nearly impossible: Children are unable to liberate themselves from the system without being arrested or ostracized as "drop outs." When children turn five (or as young as three), most parents are swept up in the routine of registering their children for public schooling because they believe that they have no choice. Most parents never question the necessity of a public, traditional education, and assume that school is a must. Therefore, the majority of children cannot count on their parents to liberate them from

the clutches of traditional schools, as many parents are forced to be allies of the schools.

If we are to grow a society of free, liberated people, the most basic and obvious (yet grossly overlooked) step would be to start by parents and the community treating children humanely and with respect. Part of that action would entail tearing down the oppressive governmental institution of compulsory schooling in favor of self-directed learning and community exploration/learning groups.

Laurie A. Couture, M.Ed.  
Exeter, NH

<http://www.childadvocate.org>  
[childadvocacy@hotmail.com](mailto:childadvocacy@hotmail.com)

## Article appreciated, Crass reprint not

To The Editor—

I appreciated Jill Haunold's article about "Schooling as Oppression." As the mother of a young child, these are issues I contemplate regularly as I try to figure out what to do when my kid reaches school age. Haunold does a good job of describing the ways that schools and schooling limit and oppress children and connecting that to the limiting and oppression of adults. I would have liked Haunold to go further. She drew a clear picture of how school and schooling hurts kids, and I would have enjoyed an exploration of the benefits and problems of the various alternatives to school. I also would love to read a discussion of how white flight from public schools is impacting kids.

In addition, I wanted to comment on your reprint of an open letter regarding the San Francisco Mayoral election of 2003. I disagree that the letter was an "embarrassment to the anarchist milieu," although some personal attacks on [infoshop.org](http://infoshop.org) and indymedia sites where the letter was posted showed an embarrassing tendency among some anarchists to resort to personal attacks instead of respectful debate. However, what I'd like to comment on is the subtle way the letter was misrepresented. You presented the letter as



Chuck Dodson



having been written and signed solely by Chris Crass. In fact, the letter was co-written by Chris and local anarchist/feminist/historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, and was cosigned by over 20 people, many of whom are anarchists and have been involved in anarchist projects in the bay area for years. These omissions give the impression that the letter represented the views and work of only one person. This is problematic because it ignores the participation and contributions of other people, presenting the work and ideas as though they are Chris' and Chris' alone. It also gives the impression of Chris as a lone individual or the lone leader representing this perspective, when in fact there is a lively dialogue about and a broad experience of anarchist perspectives on participation in electoral politics, and Chris's views come out of those experiences and dialogues instead of determining them.

This is particularly troubling because the state and corporate media often strategically isolate individuals as leaders and set them up for attack as lone voices. People in the anarchist community have experienced this far too often, and it's a disturbing trend to see in an anarchist

publication. Isolating Chris by attaching the ideas to him and then calling him an embarrassment to the anarchist milieu for articulating those ideas might win you points in a particular argument, but it doesn't serve the movement to isolate people, render other people and their input invisible, and reduce an entire tendency within the milieu into one person's words. It also tends to intimidate other anarchists who agree with these views from expressing them publicly, for a justifiable fear of personal attacks.

Thank-you for your time.

Rahula Janowski  
San Francisco, CA

Jason comments:

## No misrepresentation

Actually, the open letter you mention advocating anarchist participation in the farce of electoral politics was presented in these pages exactly as it was published or reproduced in several different places that I saw it, except that we didn't append the list of co-signees to the letter. The original statement was clearly signed by Chris Crass, who is easily identifiable by many anarchists (especially in California) as an activist in the anarchist milieu. And obviously, the embarrassing thing about the

statement for anarchists is that it was signed by someone who publicly purports to be an anarchist, but who in this case supports engagement in the muck of electoral politics instead! The list of co-signees was left off because none of them are identifiable as claiming to be anarchists to the average reader—nor even to most of the more sophisticated, long-time readers—of this magazine (which makes their co-signing of the statement not embarrassing to other anarchists in the least, since it wouldn't be an embarrassment to anarchists if liberals or social democrats—or other people not identifiable as anarchists—support the state!).

I also have to mention that as the letter was published and distributed in the versions I have seen there was no indication that it was co-written by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, whose anarchism I find dubious, anyway. (I have reviewed two of Dunbar-Ortiz's books for this magazine, and I've published at least one of her letters to this magazine but I've nowhere seen her ever claim to be an anarchist.)

Therefore there was no conspiracy to "isolate" Chris Crass as the lone originator or representative or whatever of this embarrassment to the entire anarchist milieu. The goal was merely, as a situationist once put it, "to make the shame

more shameful by giving it publicity." If the shoe fits others, let them wear it as well!

## In defense of Direct Action

To Anarchy,

In the introduction to the section on identity politics in *Anarchy* #57 (Spring-Summer 2004) titled "Anarchist Identity in the 21st Century?" Aragorn! writes, "Anarchists are just beginning to approach identity politics in a critical way. Up till now much of the anarchist articulation of these themes has looked like an embarrassing parroting of the exact same phrases and intentions coming out of the worst of the New Left. This has ranged from anarchist support of Direct Action's firebombing of pornography shops to anarchist calls for an 'anti-oppression analysis (as) key to leadership development.'"

For starters, Direct Action (the Canadian underground anarchist cell from the early 1980s) did not firebomb any pornography shops. That particular legacy belongs to the Wimmen's Fire Brigade, a completely different and much larger group, two members of which also happened to be part of Direct Action.

Second, as an anarchist, Aragorn! should know that there is no such thing as "anarchist support" for anything, if only for the same reason that there seems to be no such thing as anarchist agreement on anything. Responses within the anarchist milieu to the firebombings were not monolithic but mixed, to say the least, with some seeing the action as misguided censorship while others regarded it as a well-deserved comeuppance following years of futile demonstrations. Liberals, leftists, feminists, and anarchists lined up on both, and all sides, of the issue.

Third, to claim "Direct Action" [sic] were simply mirroring "the worst of the New Left" is to be ignorant of the words and accomplishments of the former while attributing their source and influence to the latter. One need only read the sludge from



that era of New Left feminism by the likes of Andrea Dworkin or Catherine A. MacKinnon to see the disconnect.

Fourth, the pornography shops in question (the Red Hot Video chain) were specifically targeted for their dissemination of bootlegged films from Third World countries showing actual forced enemas, rapes, humiliation and, in some cases, murder—of women, many discernibly under age. Members of the Wimmin's Fire Brigade came together from working on other projects to participate in the firebombing. Most were not against pornography per se, nor did the majority of them consider it an exclusively women's issue. Indeed, male friends helped out in their own way with the action. It's therefore unclear how this serves as a critical example of identity politics. Unfortunately, the story of the Wimmin's Fire Brigade has been passed down in some circles as a tale of crazed feminazis on a rampage against all forms of erotic representation.

Finally, and to confuse matters more, Aragorn! then suggests elsewhere in his introduction to offer "an anarchist identity that would challenge the mythology of the Civil Rights Movement." But why anarchists (or anyone else for that matter) need to worry about identities at all, regardless of whether or not those identities challenge mythologies or meet Aragorn!'s standard of political correctness, remains a mystery, at least to me.

Jonathan Slyk  
Vancouver, B.C.

## Aragorn! responds

Jonathan,

I believe that the question of identity is central to the role that anarchists will take in the next century. This question is entirely wrapped up in the problems you also seem interested in, history, action, belief, and politics. Extracting this sense of identity from the commissars of political correctness and the historians of glorious revolutions failed is the project that I intended to allude to in my introduction. I apologize that my specif-

ic examples were too distracting for you to get this point.

The historical legacy of Direct Action is an exciting one and I appreciate your vigorous defense of it.

## Conservative anarchism?

Mr. McQuinn,

As a former conservative looking for a new home, I have been intrigued with the ideas of anarchism and actual freedom. Over the last few months I have tried to study the subject as well as I could, although starting from scratch without any pointers has been difficult. I have read a great deal of libertarian view points, which I find ultimately very interesting, though I can't say I agree wholeheartedly. And shortly after deciding that I didn't think my thinking truly fit into the libertarian landscape, I declared myself an anarchist to my wife and a friend. This, however, was before reading your publication. Note here that I was very undereducated about the modern and historic anarchist movements and still largely am.

Although your publication seems to denounce marxism and "leftism" in general, I find the over all sensibilities ultimately at least socialist, if not marxist.

A definition which I had considered good for anarchy was this: Absence of any form of political authority. Obviously oversimplified, I got this from a web dictionary, but I thought it would be a good start. However, I have found in the pages of your magazine: arguments against automobiles seemingly identical to a green party platform; severe generalizations and unquantified rants about capitalism (not an argument was present—I read most of this issue, please excuse any oversight), which causes one to assume that your contributors are of the opinion that any and all readers will not only understand their arguments, but agree; a piece about a racist anarchist group, APOC (to my understanding, racism occurs when a person is (in this case) accepted or denied due to race, and that remains true whether this group admits any white people or not.

By classifying your desired members by race, by what method have you welcomed or denied people? I can not bring myself to believe that white people are inherent racists and black people are automatically not: any thinking person can see that both caucasians and "people of color," as well as anyone else, can be racists, though another article in this issue seems to suggest otherwise. And if your response is that I was raised to not except my own racism, this letter is a waste of my time. Can a more base argument ad hominem be made then to degrade a person's lineage and culture to the point of making it arguably immoral? It avoids the broader questions of individuality and free will, and is a brand of hate-filled propaganda to advance a cause, which is necessarily political due to its nature. It is based on a self serving motivation.

Not that this issue was all bad: I learned a lot. The book reviews seemed well formed. This is not to detract from the intelligence of anyone involved. I just do not understand. My reasons for thinking about anarchism were the desire to be left alone to my own devices. To live without interruption, and to not be forced by anyone to do anything. Certainly, to regain total control of my own fate, as much as humanly possible.

But ingrained in the pages of this publication, I have been insulted, instead. I have chosen, and will continue to chose, my spiritual beliefs, my beliefs about the environment, my beliefs about guns, about violence, etc. etc. etc., yet it seems all too important for most involved herein to sway me to their thinking. Isn't that part of what I am trying to avoid from the state? I am neither advocating nor disavowing any ideologies, yet it is apparent that some of your colleagues would have me do as they please, as opposed to following the truest convictions of my person. And I for one cannot be so misused; I say so to the state, to all sides of the political arena, and to any individual who thinks differently, including anyone who hides inside of the term anar-

chism.

Not to say that people should not try to persuade; it is a strong belief of mine that it is my responsibility to teach those I can. But there is a fine and definite line between the honest urge to inform and the arrogance that accompanies any "my way is the absolute right way" ideologies. It is with that point in mind that I expect (not necessarily you personally) some who read this to attack my motives, attack my background, attack my skin color, etc, etc without even honestly exploring the points I have (hopefully) articulated.

And possibly this is my mis-education, but to proclaim "Capitalism is evil, trees are good" is to miss the point of anarchy, which should more rightly be stated "I think capitalism is evil because (insert assertion and evidence) and that trees are more important to me than being able to drive a car, but as an anarchist, I must use self restraint and allow you to decide for yourself, as I am expecting to decide for myself. To involve myself in the type of discourse necessary to convince you takes at least a willingness to discuss on your part, in which case I am ready. But also, and more importantly, to impose my will upon you in any form, is to betray the ideas I claim to hold."

Again, maybe I was just completely wrong about anarchism. If it is merely a place for disaffected individuals to formulate ways to frustrate authorities, or a vehicle for any political goal, I am not interested. I am in search of others truly interested in freedom, however—both the freedom to do as I would, and the responsibility to allow others the same. The only argument left, in my mind, is how to reduce harm in that process.

James  
(no address by request)

## Jason responds:

### No anarchist orthodoxy

I would point out that:

1) There is no consensually accepted anarchist orthodoxy—in other words there are no particular theoretical ideas that are accepted



by all anarchists beyond rejection of the state and related forms of political authority.

2) However, most actually-existing anarchists in the US and the world are also anti-capitalist. They consider the basic tenets of capitalism to almost inevitably require the diminution or termination of most people's freedom. (Although, in the U.S. and Britain there are a few—very few, compared to the number of anticapitalist anarchists—exceptions who believe that capitalism and anarchism can at least potentially be compatible. Anarchists who also consider themselves to be capitalists are exceedingly rare—almost nonexistent—in any other countries besides the U.S. and Britain.) Since most anarchists already consider capitalism to be incompatible with freedom, and since the arguments for this have been made thousands of times, they are usually just assumed by most anarchists in their writings unless the writings are specifically directed to non-anarchists who are not expected to know this. It's not like the arguments don't exist.

3) There's a huge difference between anarchists having and spreading different ideas of how they believe the world will need to change to become more generally anarchist and political statists/authoritarians who not only have different ideas amongst themselves about how the world ought to be run, but who all also seek to systematically *force* you to live the way they want you to live. Anarchists generally aren't interested in forcing people to live any particular way—except to the extent that they seek to keep other people from forcing them or anyone else to live under external compulsion as much as possible.

4) That said, there are still a lot of confused anarchists out there. That is to be expected in a society like ours which is intensely confused about most important things.

5) As you say, the APOC conference includes people who seem to advocate a sort of racist organizing, though not necessarily in a bad sense of the term. In other words, it may be a racially defined group, but there's nothing inherently authoritarian or racist about blacks or "people of color" getting together, or whites/Caucasians

getting together, or Hispanic or Germanic-heritage people, etc. getting together for specific purposes as long as they're not trying to force anything down other people's throats. Rather than being threatened by this type of gathering, it would seem to make more sense to me to give the people involved the benefit of any doubt until and unless they demonstrate we should do otherwise. Identity politics has major problems, but questions of identity certainly constitute a valid theme for gathering people interested in exploring what they do and don't have in common.

## Jeff Rowe is back!

Hi!

If you wrote me when I was in *I did not get it*. I got one letter in January '84. An unimpeachable source told me in May '85 that they had held up *at least 100 letters!* I got out on January 30, '04. Maybe I will get it here. My new address is:

Jeff Rowe  
102 Olive St.  
Heavener, OK 74937

## Prison labor union

Dear Anarchy,

Greetings from over here in the land of beans, cod, and Red Sox. Jerome White-Bey, who is an anarchist and founder of the Missouri Prisoners Labor Union, has asked me to spread the word on the changes re: MPLU as widely as possible in the anarchist world. We are hoping to increase the number of supporters for MPLU's invaluable work. It is in this spirit that I forward it to *Anarchy*. We hope it can find some space among your pages.

best to you all,  
Debbie

The Missouri Prisoners Labor Union (MPLU)(U.S.) has a new website, e-mail list for action alerts and MPLU related news, and petition to show support for Jerome White-Bey [anarchist and founder of MPLU] in his continuing struggle to be free." Website: <http://www.mplu-support.tk/>  
E-mail list: <http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/mplu>  
Petition: [http://users.belgacom.net/mplu/free\\_jerome\\_white\\_bey.html](http://users.belgacom.net/mplu/free_jerome_white_bey.html)

## net/mplu/free\_jerome\_white\_bey.html

Forward this information to e-mail lists and supporters of MPLU. Update your web links for MPLU to <http://www.mplu-support.tk/> The site at: [angelfire.com/sc2/mplu/](http://angelfire.com/sc2/mplu/) is *not* the MPLU website.

## The MPLU mission statement

\* The MPLU recognizes the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of all members of the human family and the principle that the recognition and adherence to said rights is the basis of freedom for all humans and requisite to peace in the world.

\* The MPLU recognizes and believes that all prisoners are human beings as well as political prisoners and have a right to be freed from all forms of abuse, oppression, repression, racism, sexism, and slave labor exploitation.

\* The MPLU recognizes and believes in people having the right to govern their own lives, and to be freed from wage slavery.

\* The MPLU recognizes and is founded upon the principles of liberty, equality and solidarity, and that such principles are fortified with mutual aid, free association & free cooperation.

\* The MPLU recognizes and strongly supports the abolition of all prisons everywhere, the abolition of the death penalty, and the ending of the capitalist system with its false democracy.

"Let the People Be Free"—  
"An Injury to One is an Injury to All"

## Intellectual reorientation?

I find your confession of intellectual reorientation sympathetic, having been an anarchist for over forty years, and having edited an anthology titled *Beyond Left & Right* in 1968. Around that time I coined the epithet "*technoanarchism*," which is the title of an essay in my *Political Essays* (Autonomedia)—an epithet that I continue to use.

Peace,  
Richard Kostelanetz  
PO Box 444, Prince St.  
New York, NY 10012-0008  
[www.richardkostelanetz.com](http://www.richardkostelanetz.com)

## Dear Common

The cornerstone  
Of human longing  
Is anarchy  
The will to be  
Unwilling  
The thorn in  
Utopia  
Urging its soft walls  
To remain  
A whisper outside  
The institutions  
Of palaver  
And the tears  
Of joy and sorrow  
Drawn out of  
Human history  
An exhalation  
Like the short  
Summer of anarchy  
In 1936

We the anarchists  
Don't even sign  
Our own declarations  
Parties perform patrimony  
Say it for yourself  
I break off  
I diverge  
You diverge  
We diverge  
Such notations  
Are a palmyristy  
Of gypsies telling us  
No government  
Is without pot-lids  
So one may become  
Isolated

In the ruins of  
Imagined communities  
We the anarchists  
Imagine colloquies  
Spontaneous links  
Like hey let's do this  
Concrete human beings  
Learning by doing  
In the absence  
Of countries  
Discourses  
Densities

Form means blindness  
Give us a-nomic behaviour  
Freedom is thinking  
Differently  
Freedom is others  
Abstract theories are  
Forms of domination  
Unplug anarchy  
And hear throats opened  
To yell up the street  
In real revolutions  
Every ideology shatters  
Thrown by the throng  
You see  
This is an apostrophe  
One shouldn't even  
Identify with oneself  
Now leave me to  
My daily approximation  
Of utopia here and now

Steve Collis  
Delta, B.C., Canada



# Get Anarchy back issues!

## Available back issues

Back issue prices are \$6 for the first copy by 4th Class US mail, or Surface mail to other countries. Additional back issues (after the 1st one ordered) are \$4 each. Full sets of the 44 back issues still in print (#13 thru #56) are \$80. For Airmail add \$4 for each copy ordered; 1st Class add \$1 ea.

**Anarchy #14** (28pp. tabloid) [Summer '87] Includes John Zerzan's "Vagaries of Negation," & "Intervention in Vietnam & Central America" by Noam Chomsky.

**Anarchy #15** (32pp. tabloid) [Winter '88] Includes "The Realization & Suppression of Religion" by Ken Knabb.

**Anarchy #16** (32pp. tabloid) [Summer '88] Includes Holly's "My life in the Porn Biz," Paula Webster's "Pornography and Pleasure" & more "Anarchy & Religion."

**Anarchy #17** (32pp. tabloid mag.) [Fall-Winter '88-89] Includes "Who Killed Ned Ludd?" by John Zerzan & "The Freedom of Biocentrism" by Lone Wolf Circles.

**Anarchy #18** (32pp. tabloid mag.) [March-April '89] Includes "Bigger Cages, Longer Chains."

**Anarchy #19** (32pp. tabloid mag.) [May-July '89] Special issue on "Children's Sexuality."

**Anarchy #20/21** Double issue (48pp. tabloid mag.) [Aug-October '89] Includes Richard Walters' "Whatever Happened to the Sexual Revolution," "Jealousy" by Isaac Cronin & Kevin Keating's fiction, "The Man in the Box."

**Anarchy #22** (32pp. tabloid mag.) [Nov-Dec '89] Features "In Search of the New Age" by Janos Nehek.

**Anarchy #23** (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Jan-Feb '89] Includes "The Population Myth" by Bookchin & Noam Chomsky's "Propaganda American-Style."

**Anarchy #24** (36pp. tabloid mag.) [March-April '90] Includes "An Anarchist Critique of the Politics of AIDS" by Joe Peacock, and an extensive discussion of "Anarchy & the Sacred."

**Anarchy #25** (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Summer '90] Includes "The Mass Psychology of Misery" by John Zerzan.

**Anarchy #26** (40pp. tabloid mag.) [Fall '90] Anti-work issue & Kevin Keating's "The Good, The Bad and The Angry."

**Anarchy #27** (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Winter '90-91] Special "Free the Kids" issue.

**Anarchy #28** (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Spring '91] Includes Charlatan Stew's "Myths of the Anti-War Movement" & James Koehnline's "Great Dismal Maroons."

**Anarchy #29** (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Summer '91] Special issue on "The Situationists and Beyond..."

**Anarchy #30** (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Fall '91] Includes John Zerzan's "The Catastrophe of Postmodernism."

**Anarchy #31** (44pp. tabloid mag.) [Winter '92] Special issue on "Women, Gender & Anarchy."

**Anarchy #32** (44pp. tabloid mag.) [Spring '92] Special issue on "Libertarian Fiction."

**Anarchy #33** (88pp. magazine) [Summer '92] Special issue on "Abandoning Civilization," includes John Zerzan's "Future Primitive," Fredy Perlman's "Against His-Story," & Ward Churchill's "Deconstructing Columbus."

**Anarchy #34** (88pp., magazine) [Fall '92] Includes Nick DiSpoldo's on prison life and Max Anger on the L.A. Riot.

**Anarchy #35** (84pp., magazine) [Winter '93] Includes M.A. Jaimes' "The Stone Age Revisited" & part 1 of Manolo Gonzalez's "Life in Revolutionary Barcelona."

**Anarchy #36** (84pp., magazine) [Spring '93] Includes Michael Williams' "Bisexuality" and part 2 of Manolo Gonzalez's "Life in Revolutionary Barcelona."

**Anarchy #37** (84pp., magazine) [Summer '93] Includes Fredy Perlman's "The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism."

**Anarchy #38** (84pp., magazine) [Fall '93] Includes "For a World without Morality" from *La Banquise* and "In the

Aftermath of the Spanish Civil War" by Manolo Gonzalez.

**Anarchy #39** (84pp., magazine) [Winter '94] Includes John Zerzan's "Time and Its Discontents," Manolo Gonzalez on "The Aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, Pt.2" & Neal Keating's "Rioting & Looting as a Modern Potlatch."

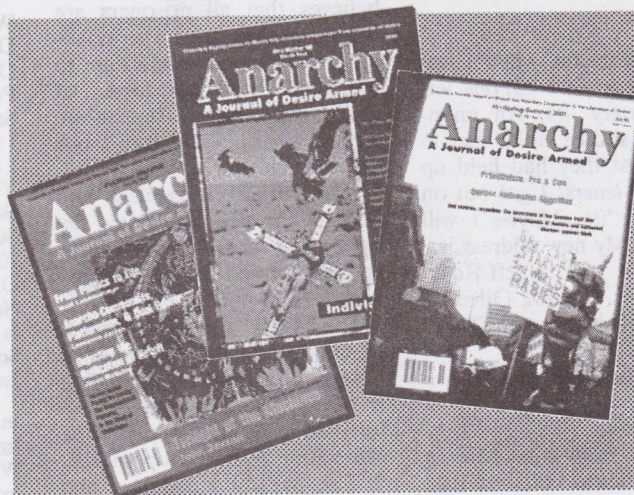
**Anarchy #40** (100pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer '94] Includes Michael Williams' "The Ecology Montreal Party: A Libertarian Frankenstein," & an interview on non-monogamy.

**Anarchy #41** (84pp., magazine) [Winter '95] Special issue on "Individualism," includes "On Max Stirner," excerpts from "The Right to Be Greedy," & Doug Imrie on "The Illegalists."

**Anarchy #42** (84pp., magazine) [Fall '95] Includes Hakim Bey's "Primitives & Extropians," Paul Simons' "New Model Army," Octavio Alberola on the revolt in "Baja California."

**Anarchy #43** (64pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer '97] Includes John Zerzan's "Running on Emptiness" Bob Black on Bookchin & Laure Akai's "In Search of the Unabomber."

**Anarchy #44** (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter '97-8] Includes Len Bracken on "Guy Debord in Paris, '68," & Paul Simons' new afterword for Zerzan's *Elements of Refusal*.



**Anarchy #45** (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer '98] Includes Brian Morris on "Anthropology & Anarchism," an interview with Manolo Gonzalez, & John Zerzan on reification.

**Anarchy #46** (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter '98-9] Includes Charles Reeve's "Unemployed Struggles in France," & Reeve & Deneuve's "Behind the Balacra of the Mexican Southeast."

**Anarchy #47** (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer '99] Includes part 1 of Michael Williams' "Collapse of the Ecology Montreal Party," and Paul Simons on "The Paris Commune."

**Anarchy #48** (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter '99-2000] Features a discussion on "Post-Left Anarchy" by Alex Trotter, Lawrence Jarach, John Zerzan and Manolo Gonzalez.

**Anarchy #49** (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer 2000] Features Lawrence Jarach and Jonathan Slyk on Seattle's anti-WTO protests, as well as John Zerzan's "Age of Nihilism."

**Anarchy #50** (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter 2000-2001] Features Lawrence Jarach's "My Date with the North American Anarchist Conference," & an interview with the AK Collective.

**Anarchy #51** (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer 2001] Features a discussion of "Primitivism: Pro & Con," along with "Disarm Authority! Arm Your Desires!" and John Spencer on advocates of urban guerrilla warfare in Quebec.

**Anarchy #52** (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter 2001-2002] Features Michael Kolhoffs "Fugitive Nation," the continuing discussion of "Primitivism," & John Zerzan's "Now Way Out."

**Anarchy #53** (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer 2002] Features "The Legend of the Squamish Five" by Jonathan Slyk, "Instead of a Meeting" by Lawrence Jarach, and Kevin Keating on "The Mission Yuppie Eradication Project"

**Anarchy #54** (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter 2002-2003] Features John Zerzan's "Twilight of the Machines," Wolfi Landstreicher's "From Politics to Life," & Jason McQuinn's "Rejecting the Reification of Revolt."

**Anarchy #55** (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer 2003] Features Stuart Christie on "Anarchist Collaboration with the State in the Spanish Civil War," and Jason McQuinn on "The Anti-Anarchist Rhetoric of Leftism."

**Anarchy #56** (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter 2003-2004] Features Ron Sakolsky on "Surrealist Desire, Anarchy, and the Poetry of Revolt," & John Zerzan's "Why Primitivism?"

**Anarchy #57** (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer 2004] Features Dot Matrix on "Domestic Violence," and Christina Heatherton on "Representation as Salvation," along with an extensive debate over the post-left anarchist critique.

## Disarm Authority! Arm your Desires!

**Anarchy** is a journal of *desire armed!* Neither left nor right, just uncompromisingly anti-authoritarian. **Anarchy** aims to help create a genuinely different alternative vision—radically cooperative & communitarian, ecological and feminist, spontaneous and wild—a liberatory vision free from the constraints of our own human self-domestication.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$6.00 for a sample copy (by Media mail in the US, Surface mail outside the US)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$7.00 for a sample copy by 1st Class in the US (\$10.00 Airmail outside the US)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$80.00 for the full set of available back issues [#14 through #57] postpaid (by Priority mail add \$15.00; by airmail outside the US add \$40.00)

\_\_\_\_\_ Send back issues # \_\_\_\_\_ (list or circle issues above & enclose \$6 for 1st issue, \$4 ea. for additional issues.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ (ALL CHECKS MUST BE MADE TO C.A.L.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECKS OUT TO C.A.L. (WE CANNOT ACCEPT CHECKS MADE OUT TO Anarchy.) All rates are in U.S. dollars. From outside the U.S. please send checks or money orders in U.S. dollars only. (For checks or money orders made out in foreign currencies you must add U.S.\$15 for conversion.) \_\_\_\_\_ Indicate here if you do **not** want us to exchange your address with other projects we trust.

Send to: C.A.L., POB 1446, Columbia, MO. 65205-1446

#58

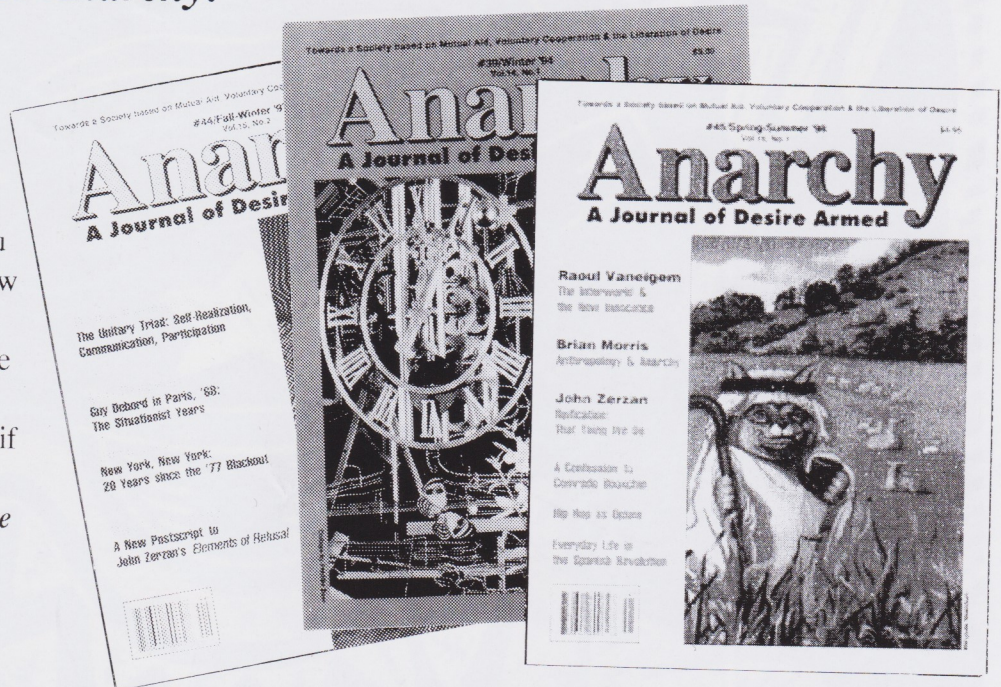


# Subscribe to Anarchy!

Tired of being told what to do, how to feel, and how to think?  
Discover the world of *Anarchy*.

*Anarchy* is home to today's most challenging, creative, vibrant and critical strains of anti-authoritarian thought. We take no shit and don't think you should have to either. Right now you can subscribe for \$16 and it'll get you four fat issues of the most provocative, confrontational discourse around. And if you take out an 8-issue subscription, we'll throw in a *free* copy of Bob Black's still-controversial book *Anarchy after Leftism* or a copy of the upcoming collection *Withered Anarchism*, as well!

We publish a journal of *desire armed*. Neither left nor right, we're just uncompromisingly anti-authoritarian. *Anarchy* refuses *all* ideology. We criticize all religion, all spiritualism, all moralism, all political ideology. We refuse to bow before the altars of "God" or the nation-state. We spit on nationalism, militarism, racism and hierarchy. We don't want to leave anything out. *Nothing* is sacred, least of all *anarchism*. We want to create a genuinely different alternative vision—radically cooperative and communitarian, ecological and feminist, spontaneous and wild—a liberatory vision free from the constraints of our own human self-domestication.



## Disarm Authority! Arm your Desires!

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$6.00 for a sample (by Media Rate in the U.S./Surface mail elsewhere  
(or \$7.00 by 1st Class in the U.S./\$10.00 Airmail elsewhere)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$16.00/4 issues at the regular individual rate within the U.S. (3rd Class)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$32.00/8 issues at the regular individual rate within the U.S. (3rd Class)  
(+ free copy of *Anarchy after Leftism* or *Withered Anarchism*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$24.00/4 issues by 1st Class mail in the U.S. or for the library rate (3rd Class)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$48.00/8 issues by 1st Class mail in the U.S. or for the library rate (3rd Class)  
(+ free copy of *Anarchy after Leftism* or *Withered Anarchism*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$24.00/4 issues outside the U.S. by Surface mail
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$48.00/8 issues outside the U.S. by Surface (+ free AAL or *Withered Anarchism*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$36.00/4 issues to other continents by Airmail
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$72.00/8 issues to other continents by Air (+ free AAL or *Withered Anarchism*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$120.00/4 issues as a **sustaining contributor** (includes all C.A.L. publications  
during the 2 year period) (MAKE ALL CHECKS TO C.A.L.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECKS OUT TO C.A.L. Press and send them to: C.A.L., POB 3448, Berkeley, CA 94703, USA. (All subscriptions are in U.S. dollars; checks or money orders in foreign currencies must add the equivalent to US \$15 for conversion.) Subscriptions are unconditionally guaranteed—if you are not completely satisfied, the remainder of your subscription will be refunded. Half-price subscriptions are available to prisoners and the indigent.

#58



**www.anarchymag.org**



**"Police Brutality" by Richard Mock**

# Disarm Authority! Arm Your Desires!